

19



Larson

94



Final Thoughts

There's a little cartoon—a doodle, really—that I came across in one of my old sketchbooks while working on this two-volume, 18-pound hernia giver. And despite the fact that I believe there's a rule somewhere that you're not supposed to laugh at your own work, this one caught me off guard. I confess: I laughed.

What I was looking at was a tavern scene where the customers and staff are all praying mantises. One mantis dressed in a rumpled coat and tie is sitting by himself at the bar, clutching a stiff drink. He has no head. And, with a voice that emanates from somewhere down below his empty collar, he angrily blurts out just one word to the mantis bartender: "Women!"

It's a cartoon that never got further than my sketchbook, and I'm not sure why. I admit, you would have to know something about the sex lives of mantises to recognize the thin slice of natural history buried in among all the other anthropomorphic silliness, but I doubt that would have stayed my hand. I do see a note to myself on the same page questioning whether this male mantis would most likely blurt out "Women!" or "Females!" and I bet that was my undoing. These sorts of decisions usually started off as minor details, grew in significance, and finally sent me into the Don't-Draw-This Abyss. (Actually, I could have just referred to Cartoon Rule #359, which clearly states that "... anything walking around with a missing head shall be deemed funny, with the exception of a puppy or the Pope.")

On another page, I found my half-doodled, half-described idea of a nightclub filled with assorted invertebrates. The dance floor is packed with creatures, all having a good time (I like the imagery already, complete with disco ball), but at a table in the foreground sits a slug couple, dressed to the nines, looking hip, but—as always—compelled to wait for a slow song.

And then I stumbled upon my crude little sketch of the astrophysicists' convention. The scene is an auditorium, and everyone is seated as one of the guest speakers begins his presentation. Only there's apparently been a mistake. The speaker is a farmer, in overalls and brim hat, and he is giving a talk on String Bean Theory.

I'll stop there, but this is just a way of divulging the one thing that haunts me now. Not every day, and sometimes not for weeks, but sooner or later it creeps into my brain, stays a while, and leaves a lingering sadness after it's gone. It is this: What else didn't I draw? What other ideas and characters are doomed to remain everlastingly in my inkwell, never to have *The Far Side* marquee hoisted over their heads, left to wander forever in the Land of the Undrawn?

C'est la vie, I suppose. If you were to ask me today if I miss cartooning (and I do hear it a lot), my answer is no, not really. As they say, been there done that. Plus, for me, there was always the unforeseen nature of this

thing, which no doubt made it easier to eventually let it go. (When Career Day comes to your high school, you don't walk around looking for the Cartoon Guy.)

Do I think I might return to the drafting table one day? Well, they say never say never, so I'll take that advice. If that haunting problem I mentioned becomes more frequent, who knows—maybe I'll need to exorcise some ghosts. (At least I should work up that praying mantis cartoon; damn, I'm sorry I missed that one.)

Serendipity has handed me a way to wrap this up. I'm sitting here writing my final essay for this book, and every few minutes I lift my eyes from the computer monitor and stare out the window overlooking the garden. But I'm not looking at the garden. I'm watching the small spiders that have spun webs between the leaded panes and the brick frame. There are four of them, and they're catching gnats like they know it's the gnat warden's day off.

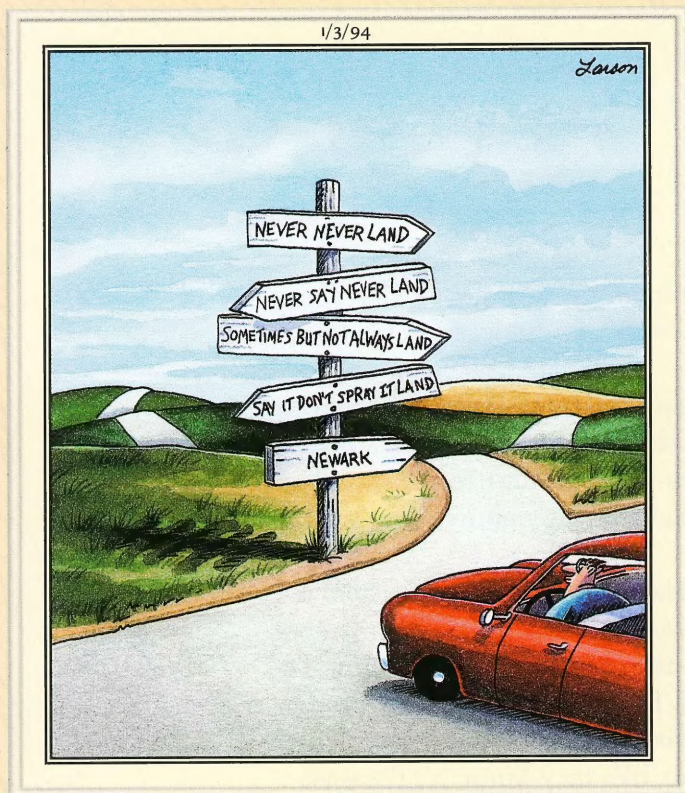
This is really a show. They're extremely small, these spiders, but the gnats—and they're as thick as, well, gnats—are considerably smaller. There are so many, the spiders aren't even bothering to throw a few holding threads around their prey. They're just grabbing and sucking down gnats, one after the other. I can't help but imagine that somewhere within the primitive, ganglionic mass that serves as a spider's brain, these little guys are experiencing a sensation that equates to what my dad, an avid fisherman, feels when a salmon strikes his line: Hot damn! Another one!

The parallels are interesting, now that I think about it: My dad's invisible fishing line/the spider's invisible web; my dad's net/the spider's holding threads; my dad sitting alone in his boat, patiently waiting for a strike/the spiders sitting alone in their webs, patiently waiting for the same signal. There's only one conclusion: My dad's really just like a big spider and all these little spiders are really just like my dad. (All we need now is for one of these little gnats to start screaming "Help me!" and this will get really weird.)

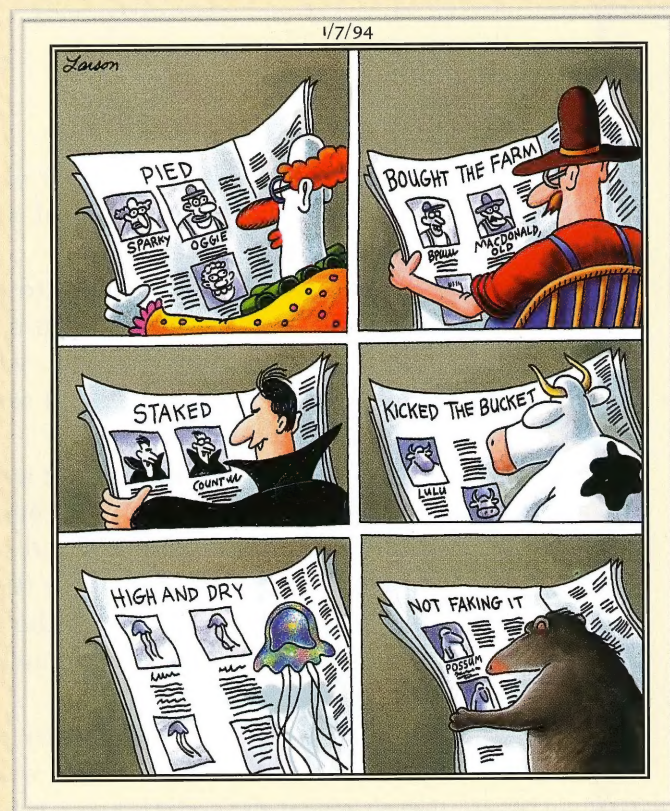
I'm telling you this because I'm guessing—or hoping—you may know me a little by now. My mind seems to wander. I started off wistfully describing a few cartoons I wish I had drawn, wondering about the ones yet to be imagined, and what happens?—I get cut off by some little spiders.

Here's where I think I must simply admit the truth: I want to stop writing about cartoons and thinking about cartoons. I just want to watch these little spiders. This is how I started as a cartoonist—drawn to the little story—and this is how I'll end.

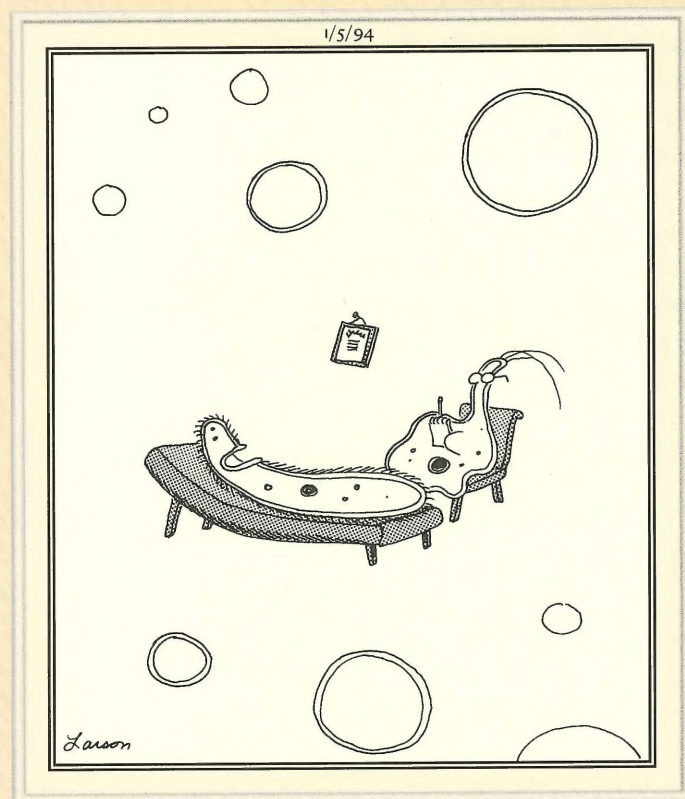
And if you run into my dad, please don't squish him.



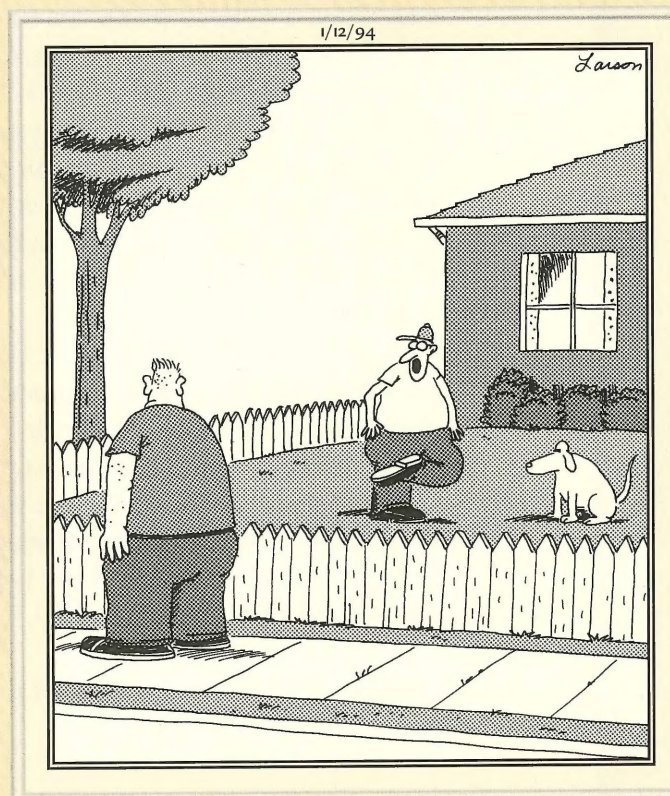
Crucial decisions along life's highway



Specialized obituaries



"Well, I just feel like I'm living under a microscope."



"Oh, not you, mister! ... I was referring to something here from my dog, Nimka."

1/4/94



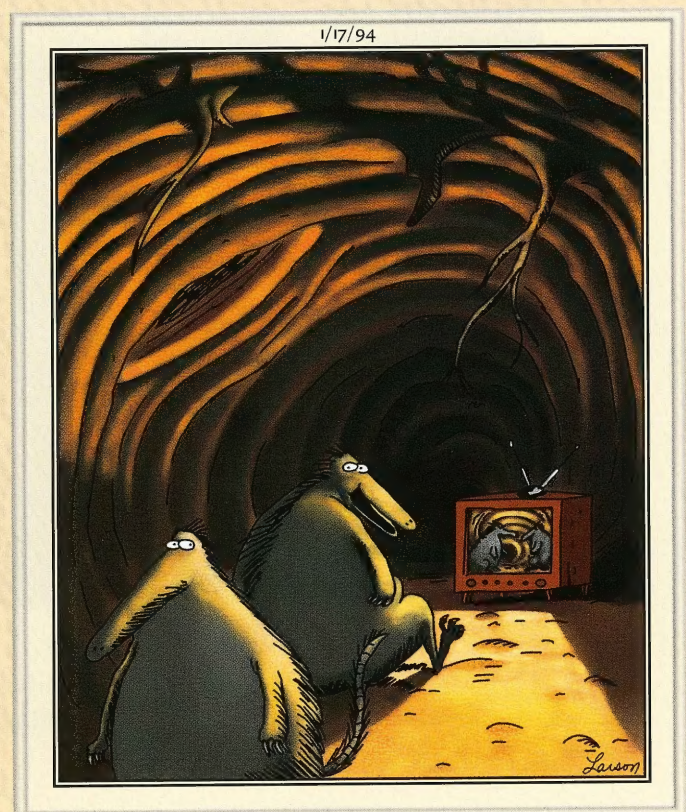
"Hey! *You* don't tell *me* what makes 'er tick!
I know what makes 'er tick, sonny boy!"



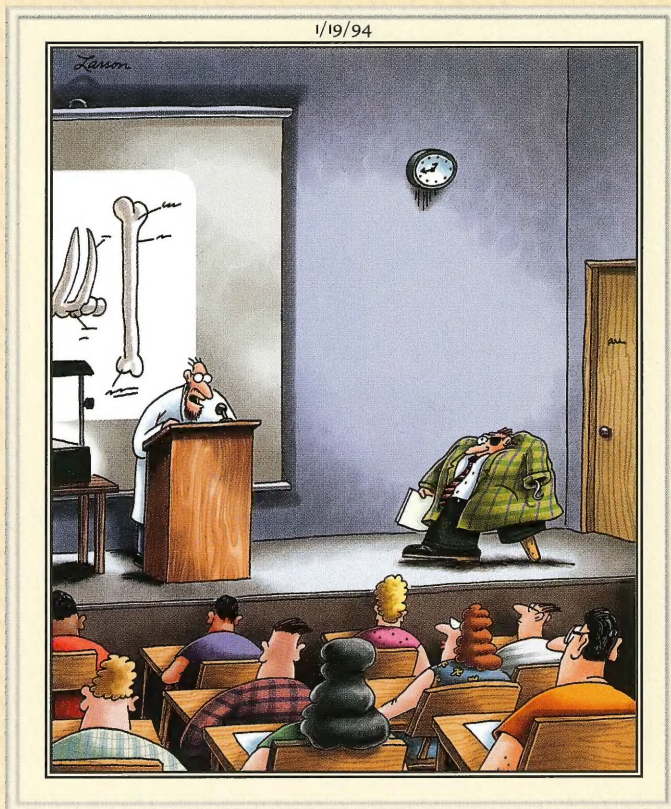
"Hey! ... You!"



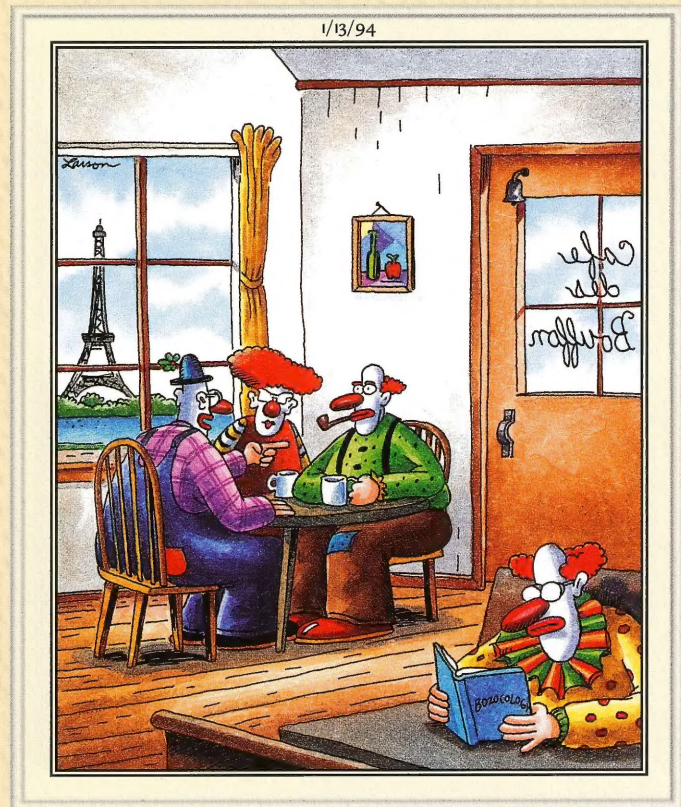
Professor Wainwright's painstaking field research to decode the language of bears comes to a sudden and horrific end.



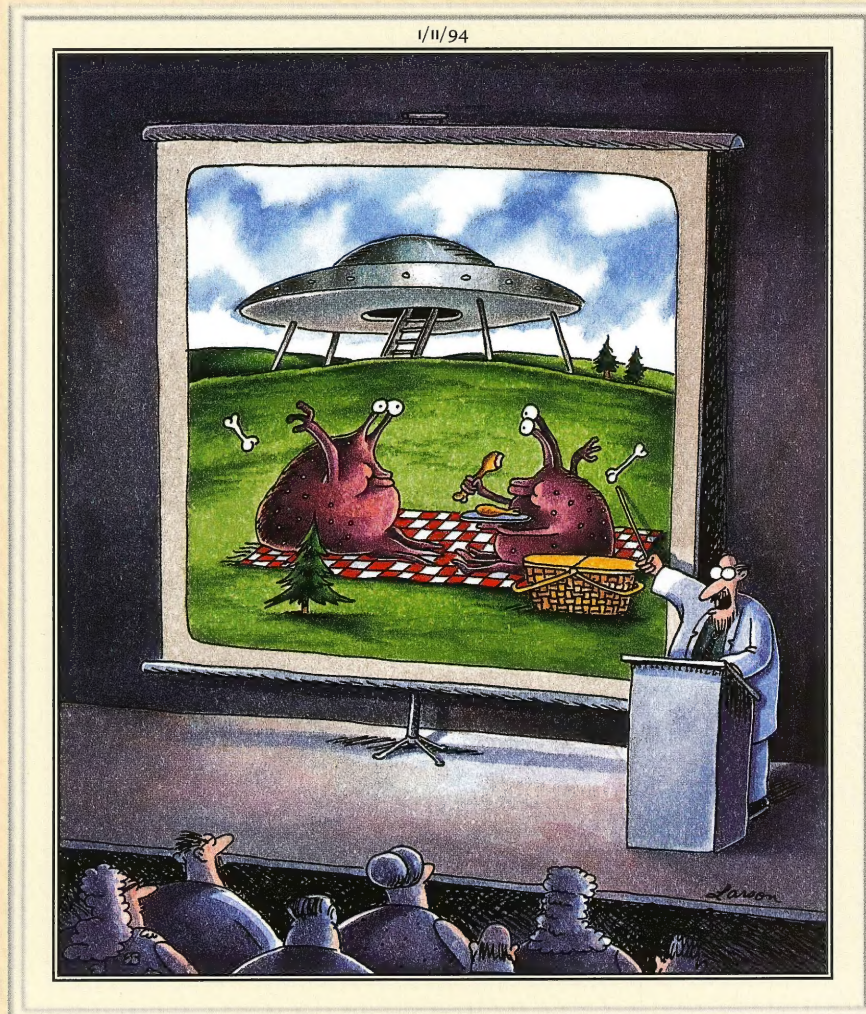
"Vera! Come quick! Some nature show has a hidden camera in the Ericksons' burrow! ... We're going to see their entire courtship behavior!"



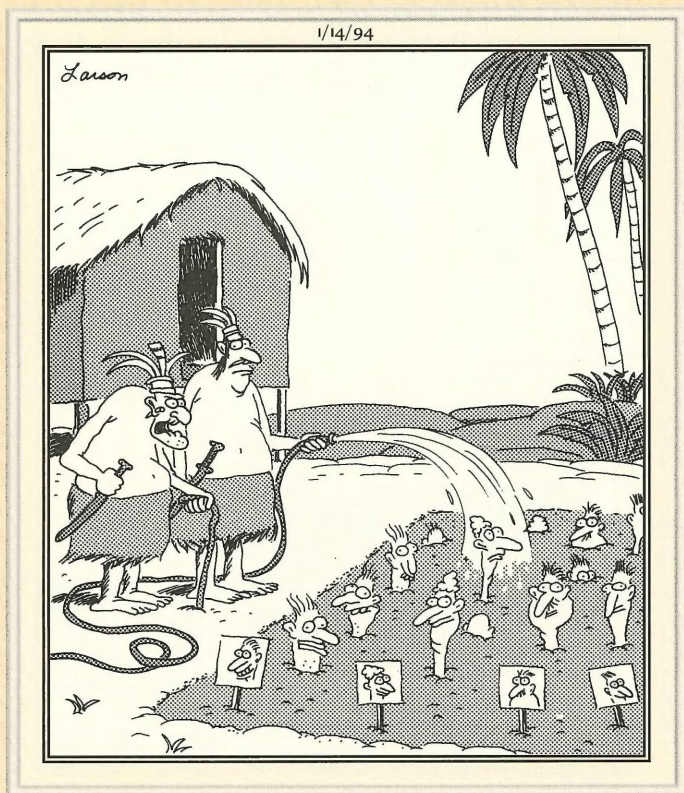
"Today, our guest lecturer is Dr. Clarence Tibbs, whose 20-year career has culminated in his recent autobiography, *Zoo Vet—I Quit!*"



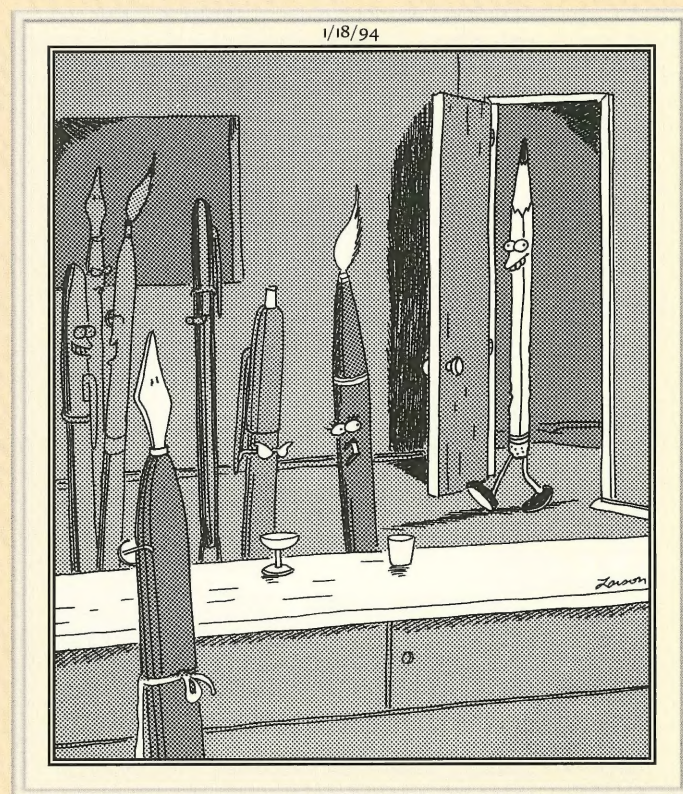
Expatriates, they migrated in the 1920s to Paris's Left Bank, gathering in their favorite haunts and discussing the meaning of cream pies and big shoes. They were, in fact, the original Bocclownians.



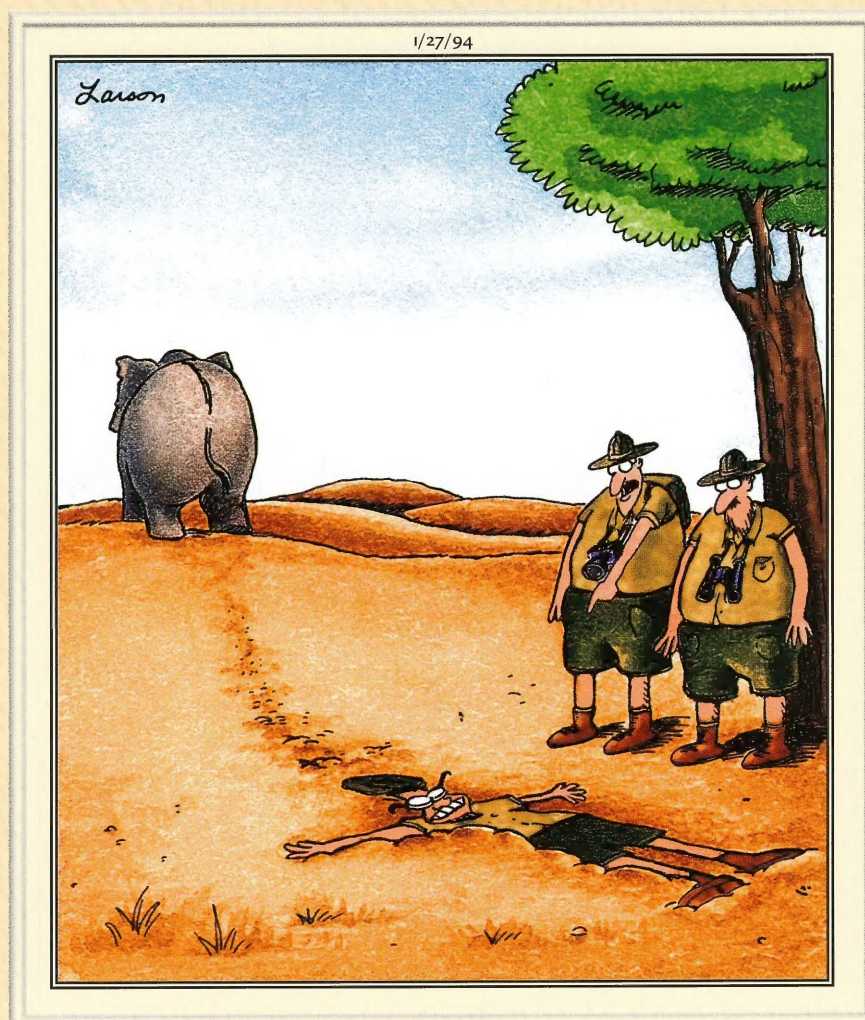
Professor Ferrington and his controversial theory that dinosaurs were actually the discarded "chicken" bones of giant, alien picnickers.



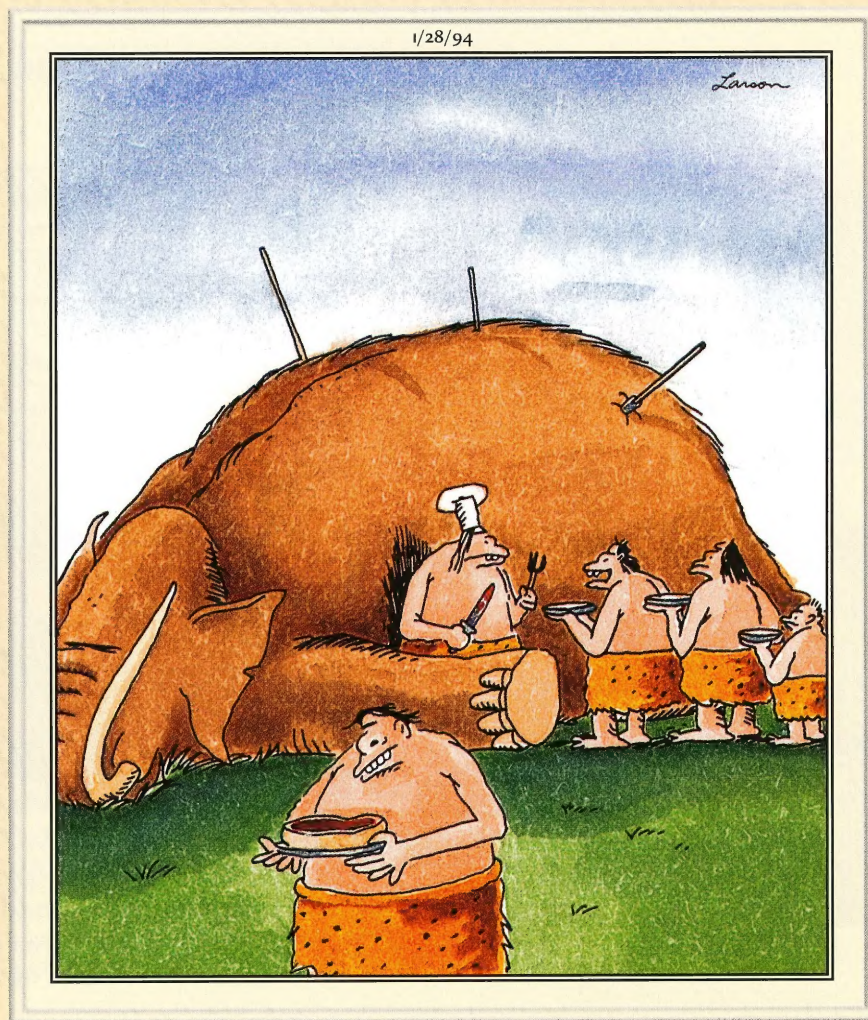
"This just makes me sick! ... Sick! ... Why, in my day, we collected *wild* heads from the jungle! ... These things are all *sissies*!"



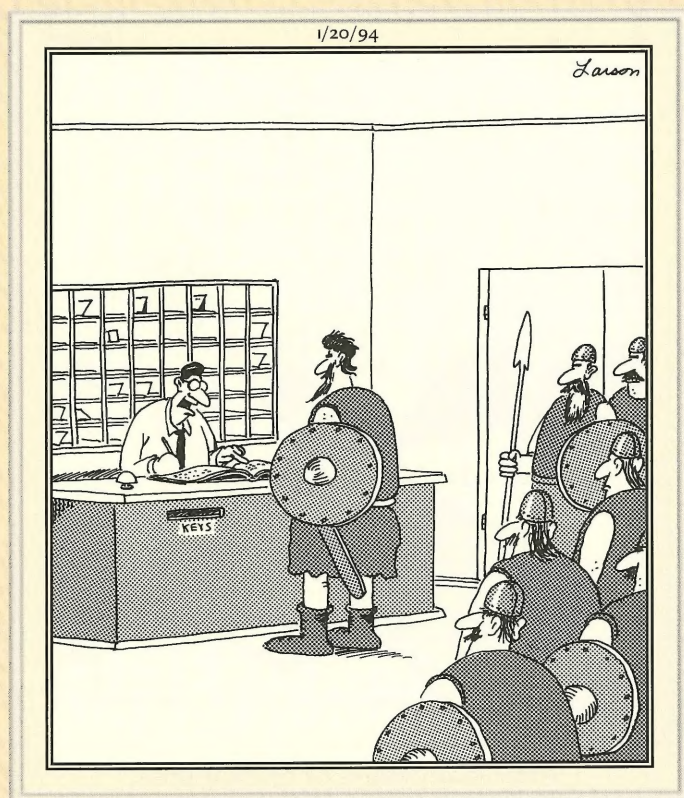
"Oh my God, Alice! ... Heading right for us! A chewed-up No. 2 pencil!"



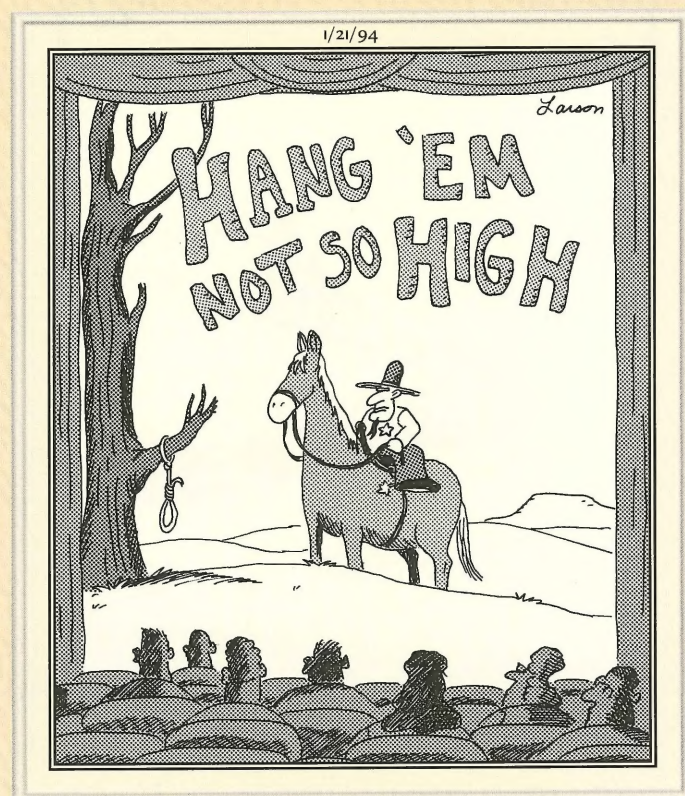
"Oh, and *that* makes me feel even worse! ... I laughed at Dinkins when he said his new lenses were indestructible."



"Uh, let's see ... I'll try the mammoth, please."



"I'm sorry, sir, but the reservation book simply says 'Jason.' ... There's nothing here about Jason *and* the Argonauts."



Midget Westerns

1/25/94



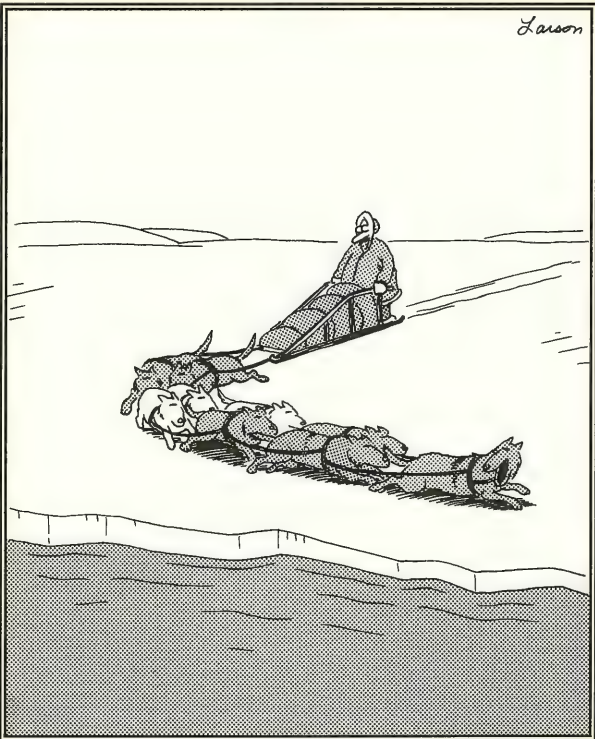
"That's him, officer. Second from the end—the 12-footer!"

1/31/94



"Well, I'd recommend either the chicken-fried steak or maybe the seafood platter. But look—I gotta be honest with ya—nothin' we serve is exactly what I'd call food for the gods."

1/24/94



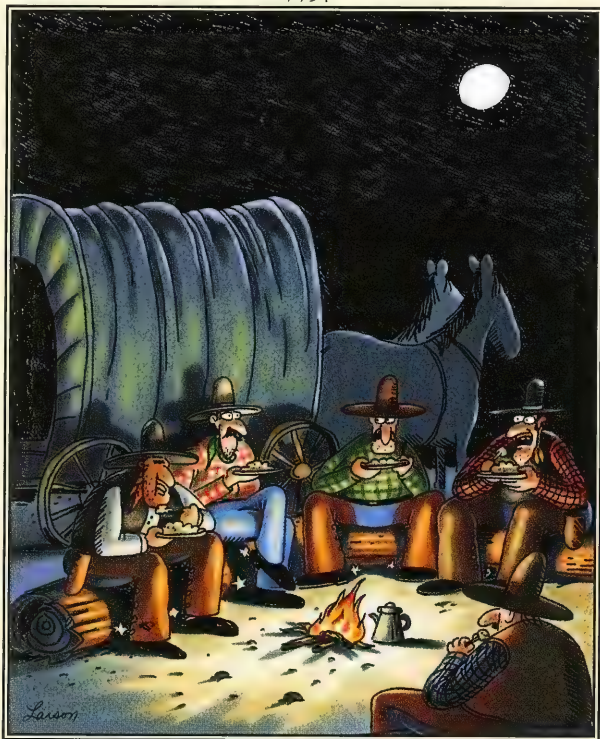
"Crack the whip!"

1/26/94



After many years of marital bliss, tension enters the Kent household.

2/1/94



"Frank ... don't do that."

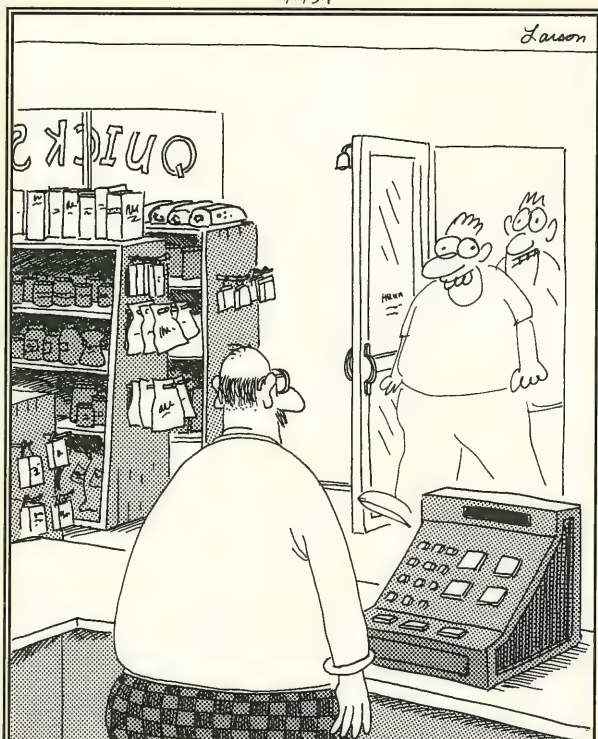
2/8/94



In medieval times, a suit of armor often served as a family's message center.

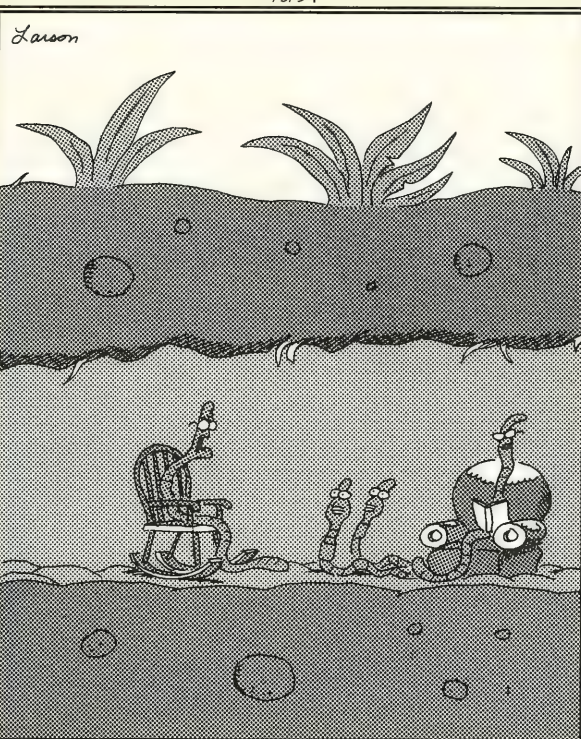
2/2/94

Larson



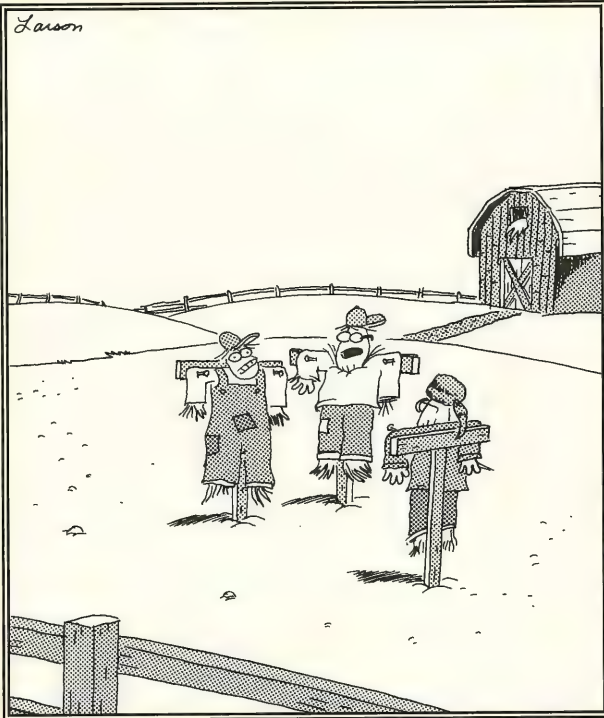
Leonard felt his skin suddenly crawl. Coming through the door were a couple of real sketchy characters.

2/3/94



"You little softies! When I was your age, I had to crawl 14 inches to the surface and back! Every day! ... Through *hardpan*, by thunder!"

2/4/94



"Come on, Johnny—don't be chicken. ... After it's over, we'll all be strawbrothers."

March 17, 1994

Attn: Mr. Gary Larson
Los Angeles Times
Times Mirror Square
Los Angeles CA 90053

Dear Mr. Larson,

I want to thank you for many years of laughter at your "Far Side" cartoons. I have been a fan for a long time and read your work first when I pick up the LA Times.

I also want to express my recent sadness at your choice of the enclosed cartoon. It is the first time I have ever felt offended by any of your work and felt the need to write.

I'm sure you didn't mean any harm, but I found that the depiction of a crucifixion scene and the casual reference to "strawbrothers" struck at the core of my convictions as a follower of Jesus Christ.

I came to a belief in Christianity as a young adult, and discovered that the central teaching of my new faith was the death and resurrection of Jesus to pay the penalty for my sin against God and His will for the people and world He created.

To treat something so meaningful to me and millions of others around the world in such a casual fashion is very painful.

I will not stop enjoying your work and look forward to many more years of your creative genius. Please take this letter as constructive feedback. There are some things in life that really should not be treated so casually.

Keep up the good work.

Sincerely,
Steve Morgan

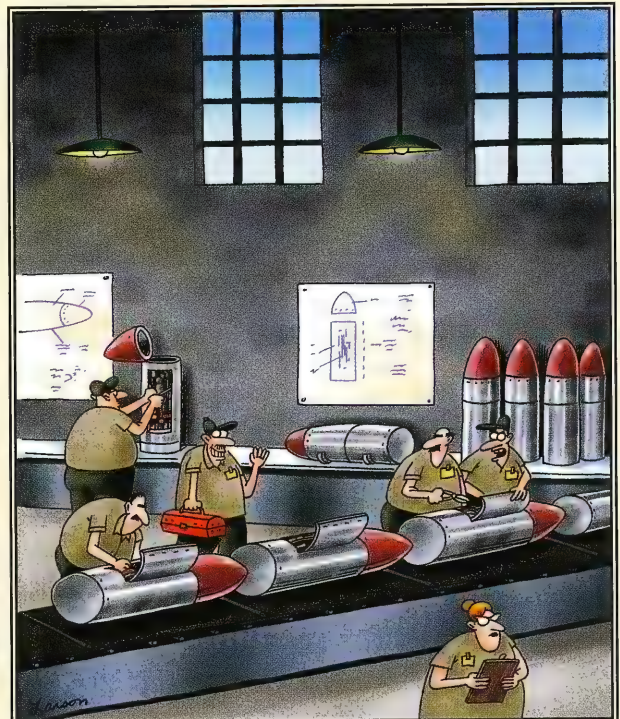
Editor's note: These are three scarecrows. No religious themes were intended.

2/10/94

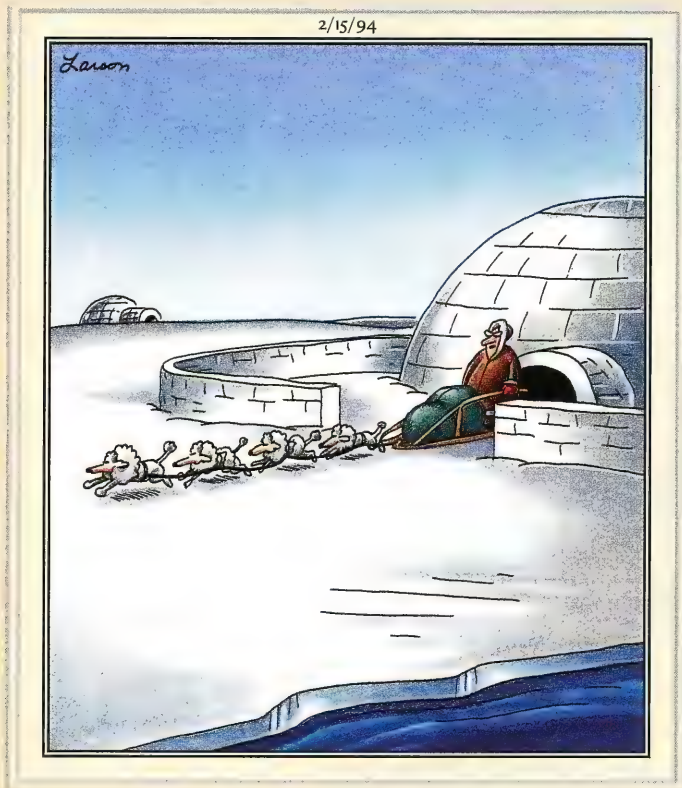


"Well, as usual, there goes Princess Luwana—always the center of attention. ... You know, underneath that outer wrap, she's held together with duct tape."

2/11/94



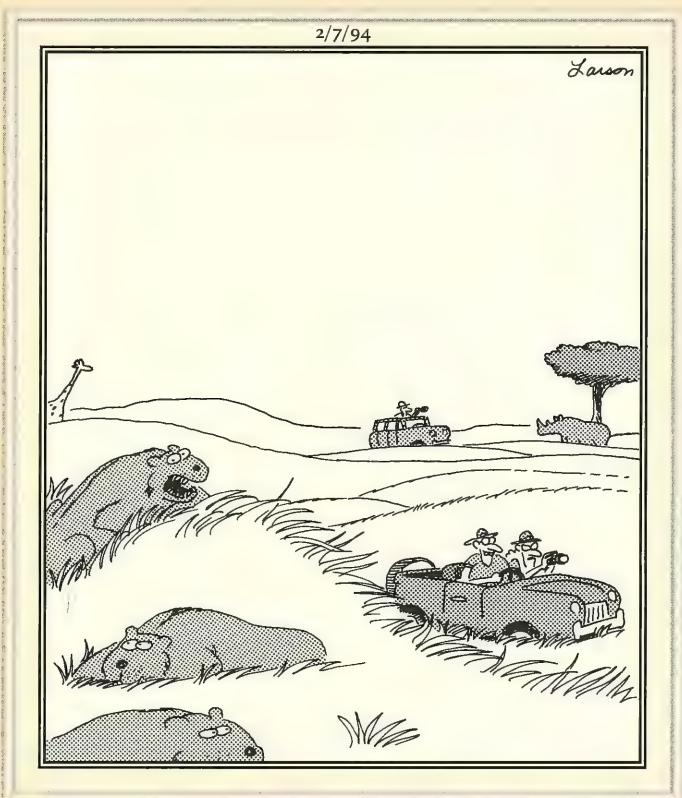
"Well, here he comes ... Mr. Never-Makes-a-Dud."



Beverly Hills of the North Pole



"Sorry, Kevin, but my friends have all advised me not to run with you anymore."

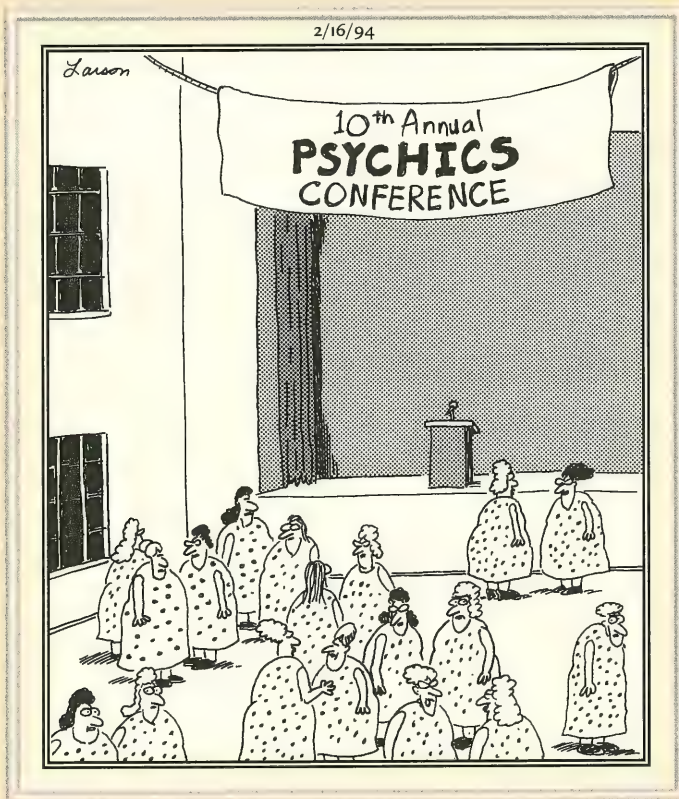


"Convertible! Convertible!"

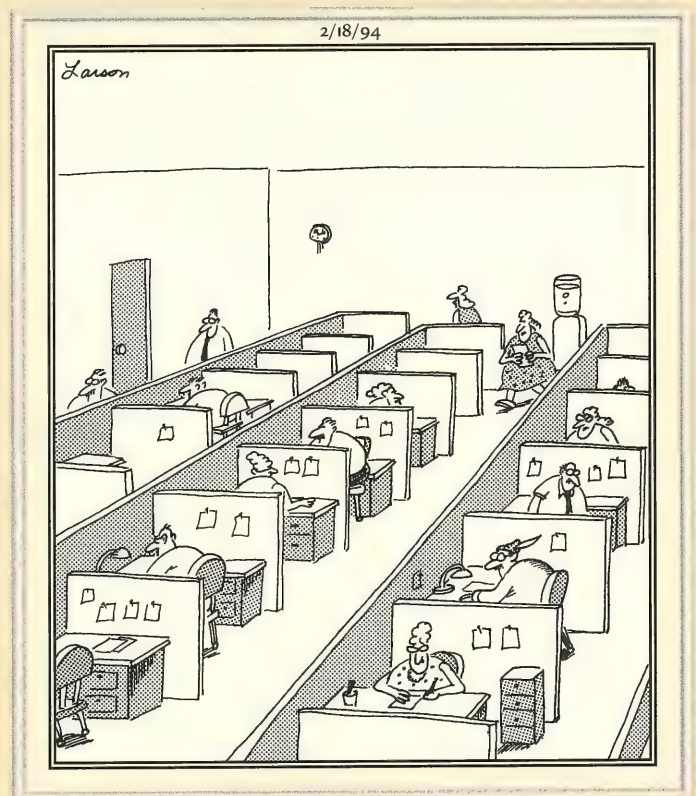




"Sorry, Bobby, but you know the rule—no swimming for a week after eating."



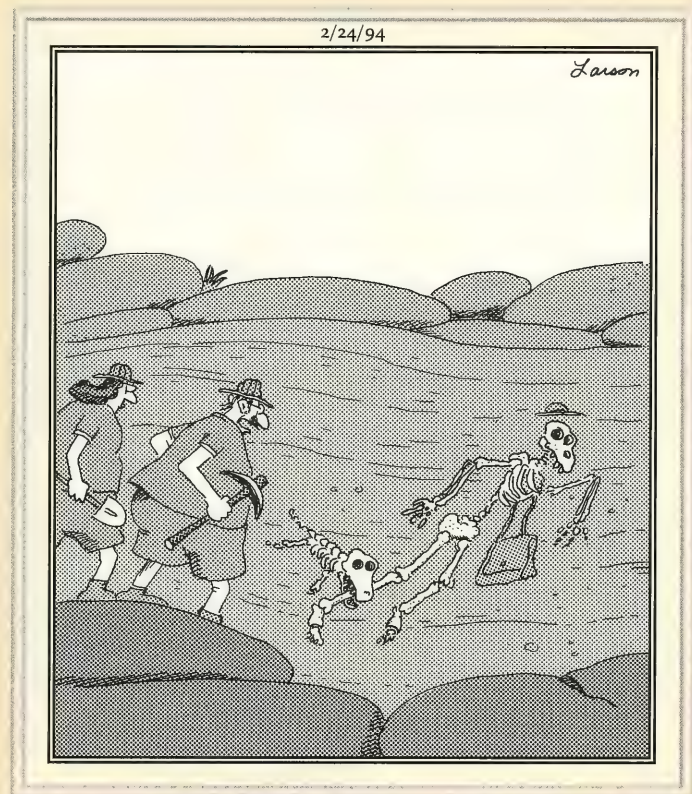
For the most part, the meeting was quite successful. Only a slight tension filled the air, stemming from the unforeseen faux pas of everyone showing up in the same dress.



Thirty years had passed, and although he had no real regrets about marrying Wendy, buying a home, and having two kids, Peter found his thoughts often going back to his life in Never-Never-Land.



"What? MacDougal is being promoted over me? ... Well, that does it! I won't take no orders from no stinkin' sodbuster!"



"What a find, Ms. Dinkins! ... It's Mailman, all right—but remarkably, this specimen is fully intact, with a *Canis nipponicus* still attached!"



More tension on the Lewis and Clark expedition



"The dentist just buzzed me, Mrs. Lewellyn—he's ready to see Bobby now."



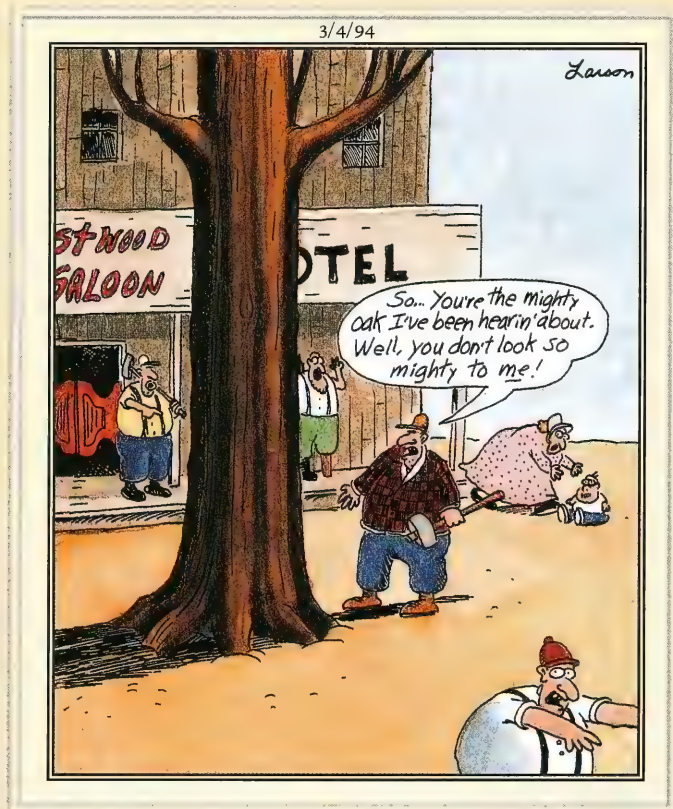
This time his practical jokes had gone too far, and Wally was finally booted off the hill.



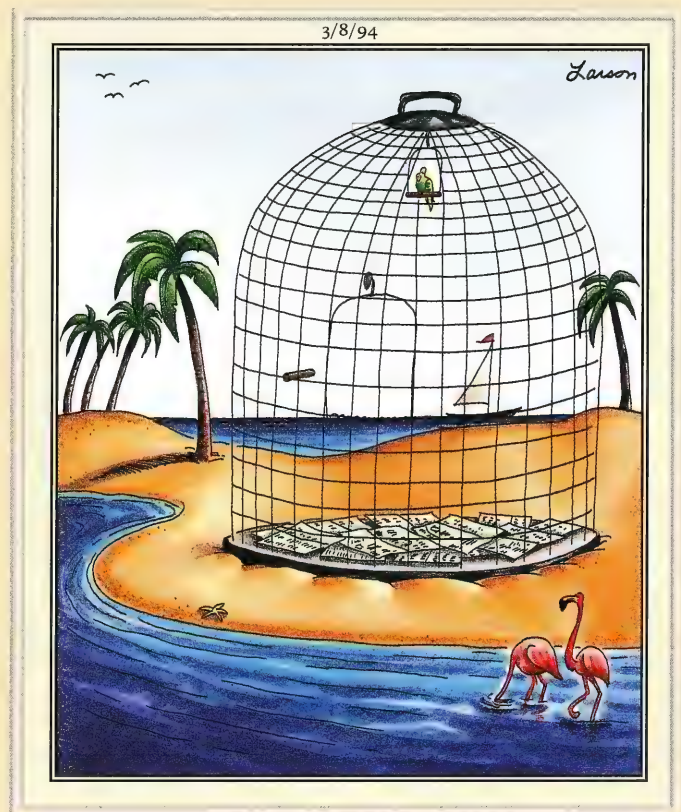
"Well, yes, that is the downside, Fluffy. ... Once we kill her, the pampering will end."



It's a known fact that the sheep that give us steel wool have no natural enemies.

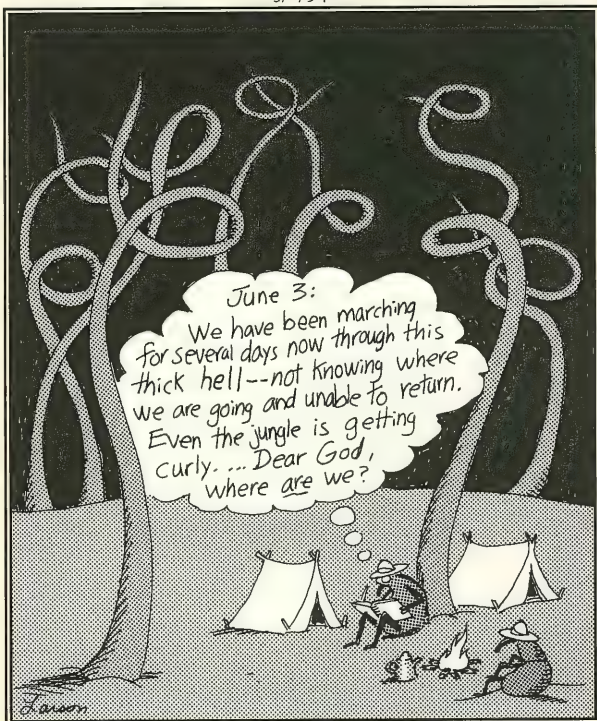


He stood there—unflinching, tall, and silent as always. But as Gus soon found out, this outward calm belied the “Widowmaker’s” reputation.

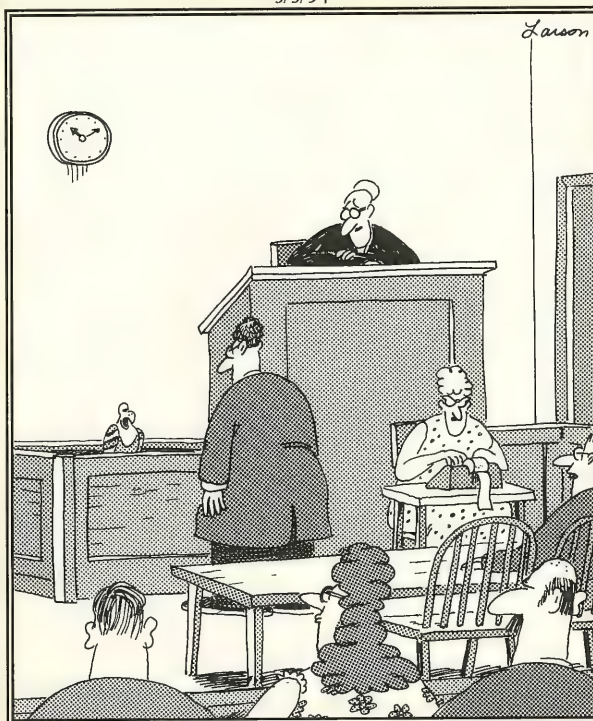


Winning the lottery had changed his life, but at times Chico still felt strangely unfulfilled.

3/2/94



3/3/94



"No, I never said that. ... Well, I actually *did* say it, but *after* he said it. He said it, *then* I said it. I'm a mimic—that's what I do."

3/9/94

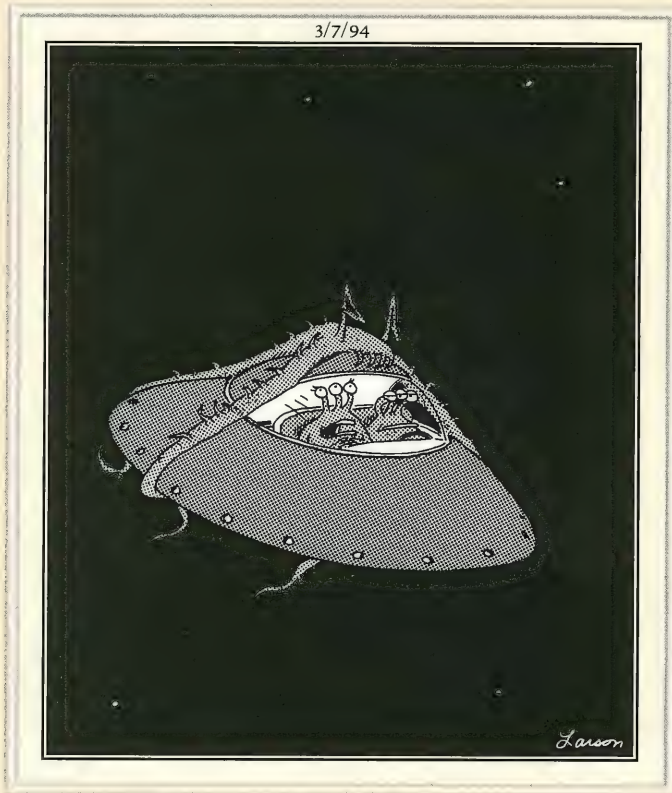


"Oh, Professor DeWitt! Have you seen Professor Weinberg's time machine? ... It's digital!"

3/10/94



Primitive mail fraud



"Aaaaaaaaaa! ... Oh, sorry—it's just the dog."



Basic field trips



The sandwich Mafia sends Luigi to "sleep with the fourth-graders."

Commission for Social Justice

Order Sons of Italy in America
March 17, 1994

Gary Larson, Cartoonist
c/o Universal Press Syndicate
4900 Main Street
Kansas City, Missouri 64112

Re: "The Far Side"

Dear Mr. Larson:

I am writing on behalf of our State Chapter of the National Commission to complain about the cartoon which you drew for publication on March 16, 1994, in the Washington Post and many other newspapers across this country.

In the cartoon, two members of the "Sandwich Mafia" are seen pushing "Luigi" through an opening in a ceiling into a cafeteria to "sleep with the fourth-graders." A copy of the comic panel is enclosed for the purpose of identification.

This cartoon offends us in two ways. First, you use the Italian term "Mafia" indiscriminately. Instead of writing at length about your usage, I am enclosing a copy of the Position Paper of the National CSJ for your edification.

Second, you use the Italian name "Luigi" for one of your characters, thus making it certain to your reading public that this particular character is either Italian or Italian American.

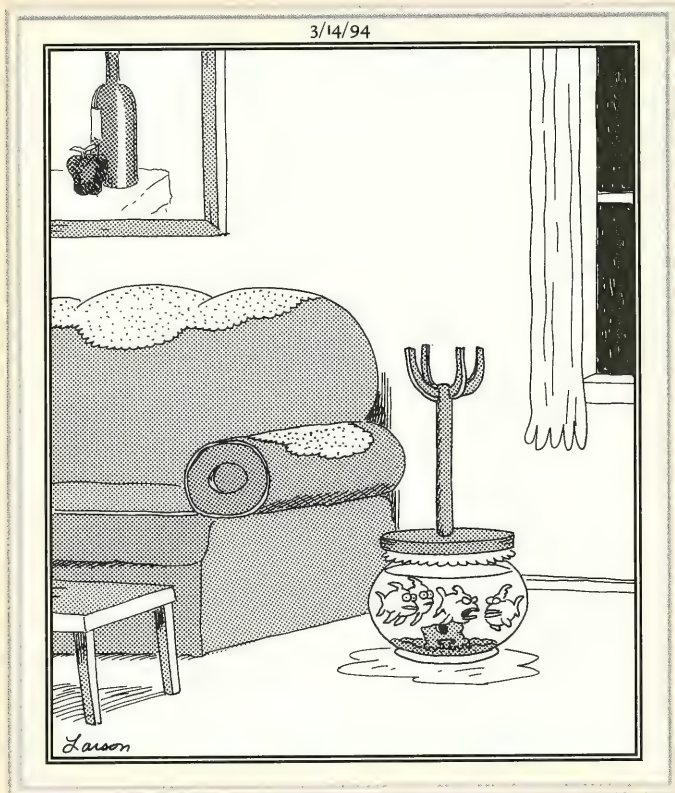
This comic panel would be just as funny, if not funnier, if you gave the character either the name "Ham & Cheese" or "Peanut Butter & Jelly" or another sandwich name, instead of using a name which is clearly Italian.

Additionally, this cartoon offends us more because it is directed to children. Nothing lowers the self-esteem of our own children more than seeing an Italian name, like their own, linked to criminal activity, in this case, the execution-style murder of "Luigi".

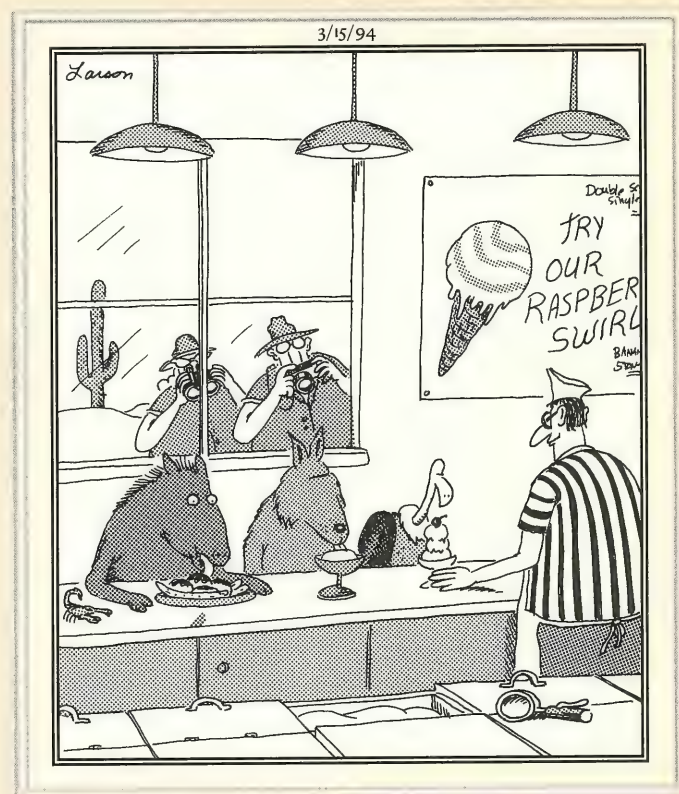
Therefore, in the future and for the best interests of our children, we would appreciate it if you would refrain from using the term "Mafia" and Italian names together in your cartoons.

Very truly yours,
Joseph Scafetta, Jr., Esq.
VA State President
Falls Church, VA 22042

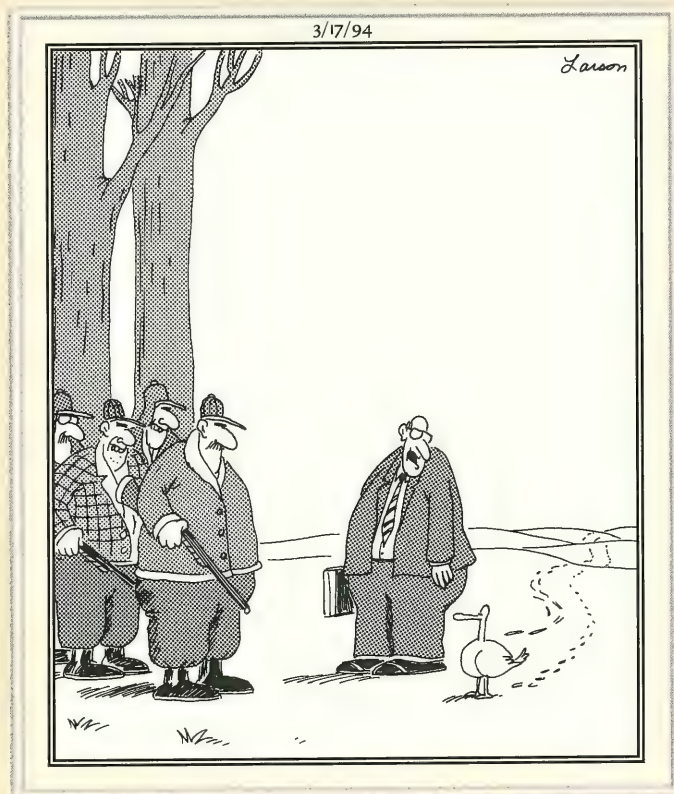
An organization dedicated to the eradication of bias, bigotry and prejudice



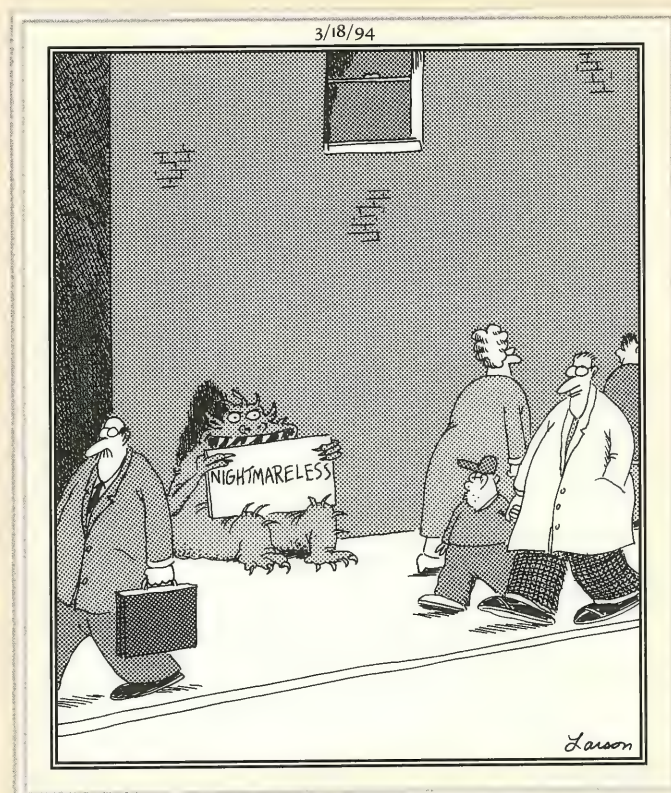
"It's a cute trick, Warren, but the Schuberts are here for dinner, so just 'abracadabra' this thing back to where it was."



Making sure not to disturb their quarry, nature lovers would approach the glass slowly, hoping to get a good look at the normally shy dessert animals.

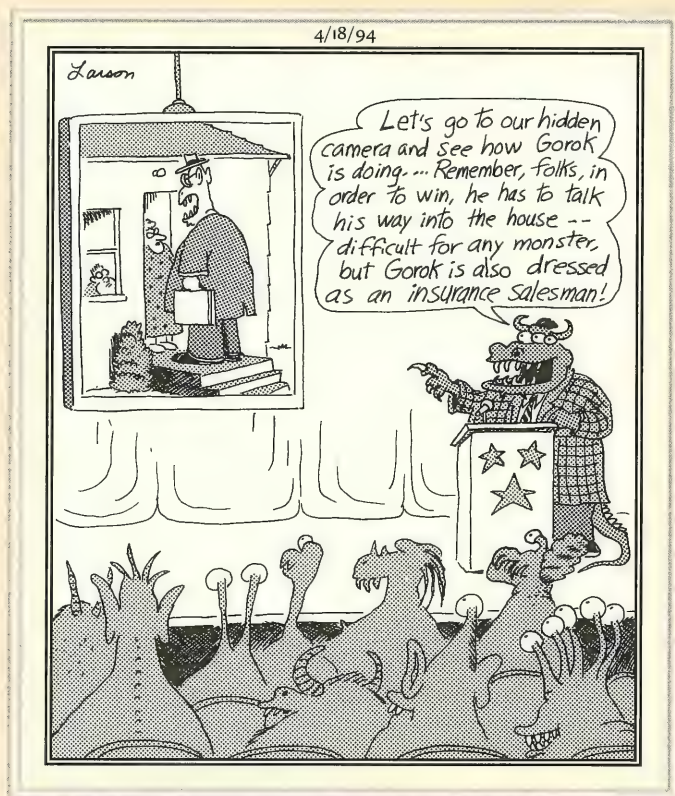


"I'm sorry, Sidney, but I can no longer help you. ... These are not my people."



Not heeding his father's advice to avoid eye contact, Joey makes a "contribution."

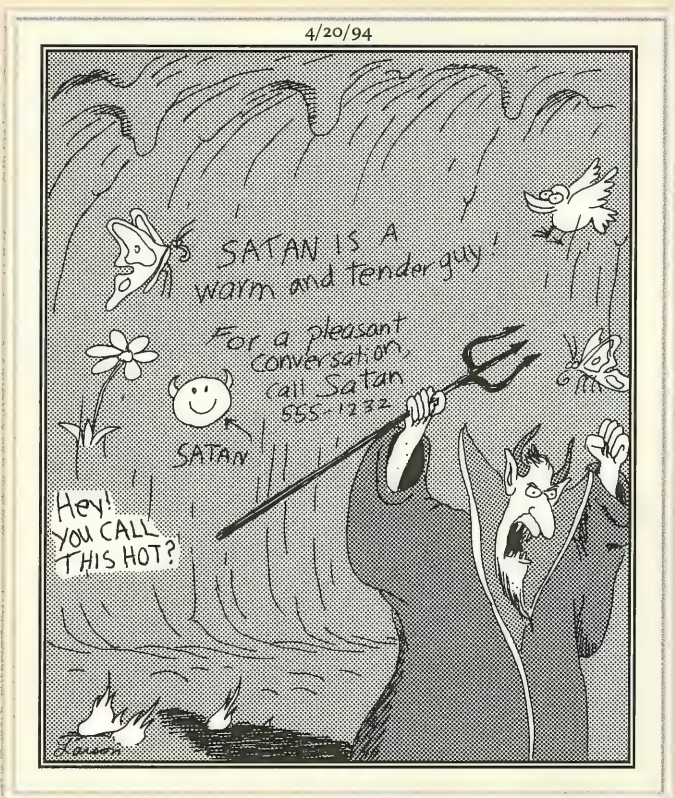
Editor's note: Gary leaves for a one-month vacation.



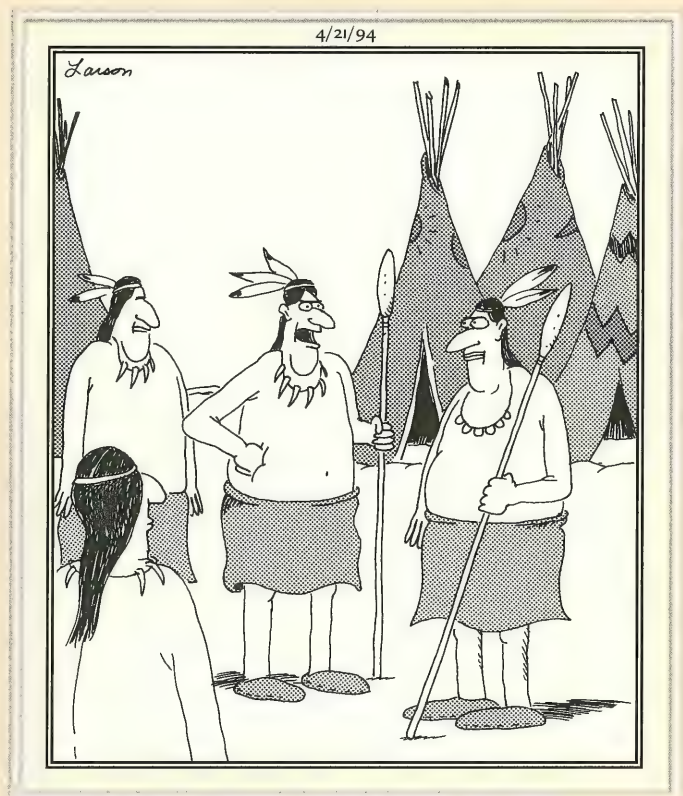
Monster game shows



At the Dog Museum



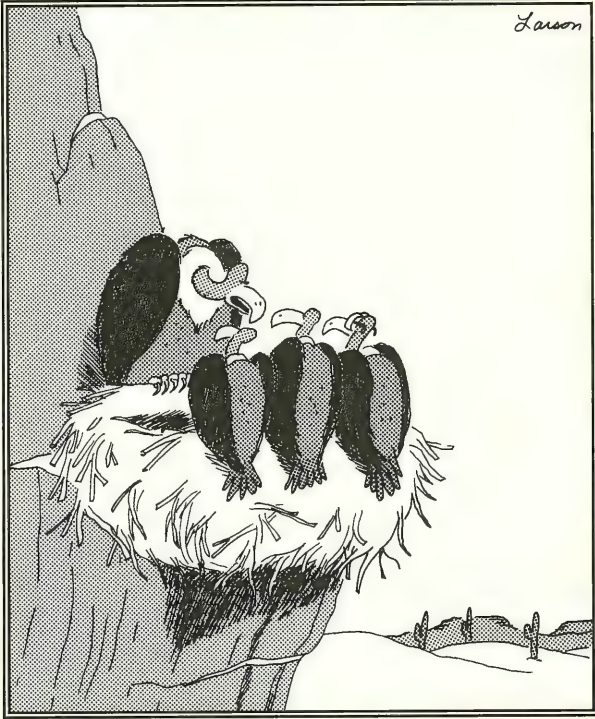
Graffiti in hell



"Well, Red Cloud, it just so happens I *did* go ask the chief! ... A bear claw necklace is a symbol of honor, a Grizzly Adams fingernail necklace is not!"

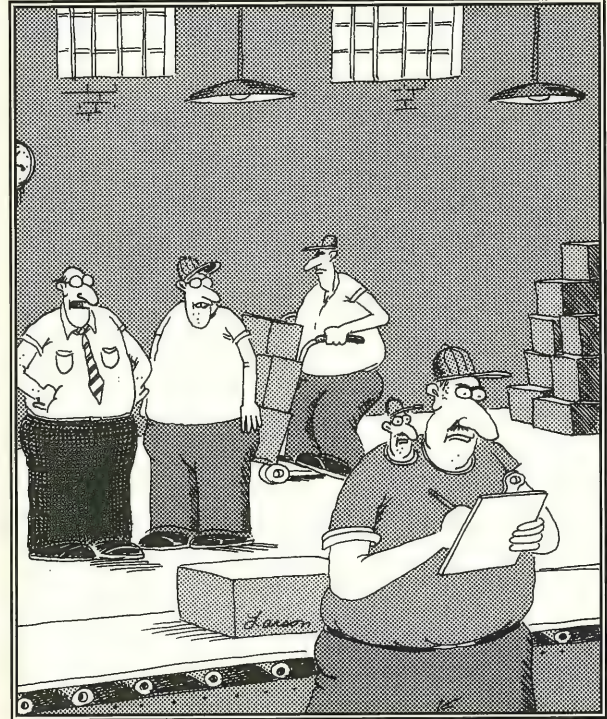
4/25/94

Larson



"So let's go over it again: You're about a mile up, you see something dying below you, you circle until it's dead, and down you go. Lenny, you stick close to your brothers and do what they do."

4/28/94



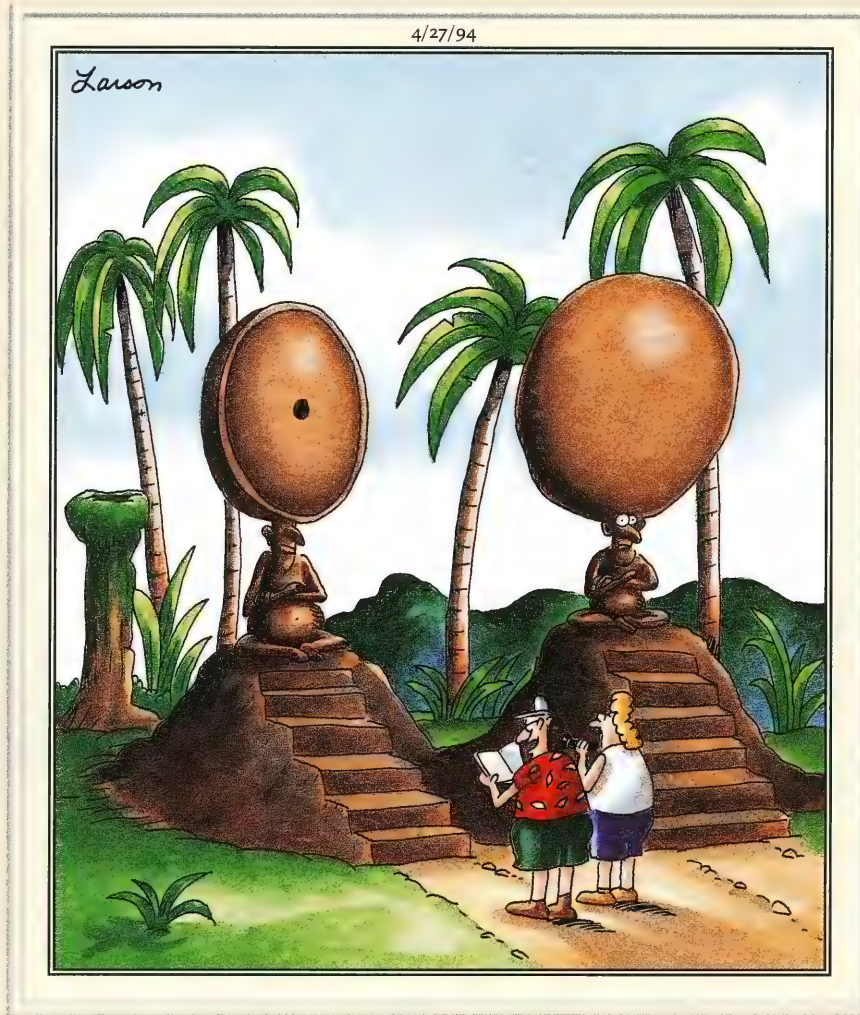
"Oh, and a word of warning about Mueller over there. ... He's got a good head on his shoulders, but it's best not to mention it."

4/22/94

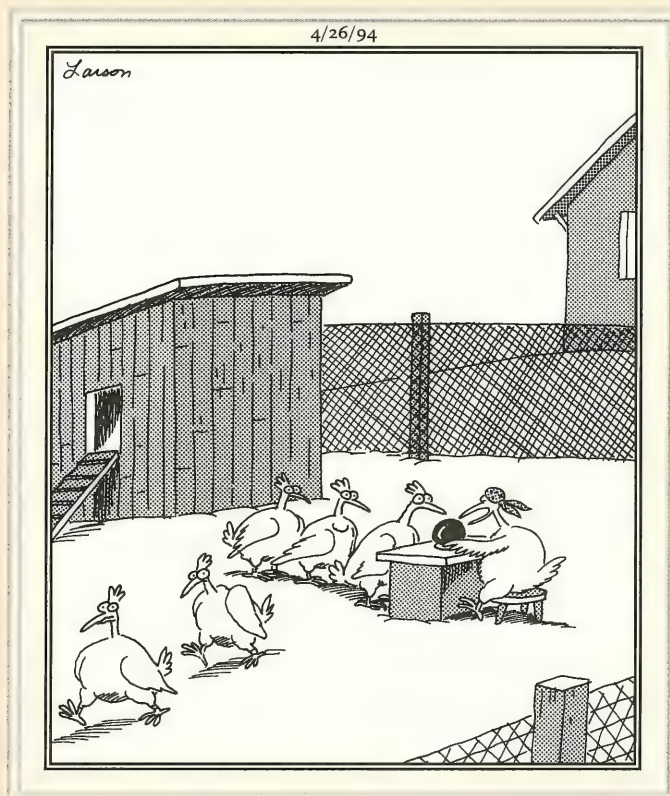
Larson



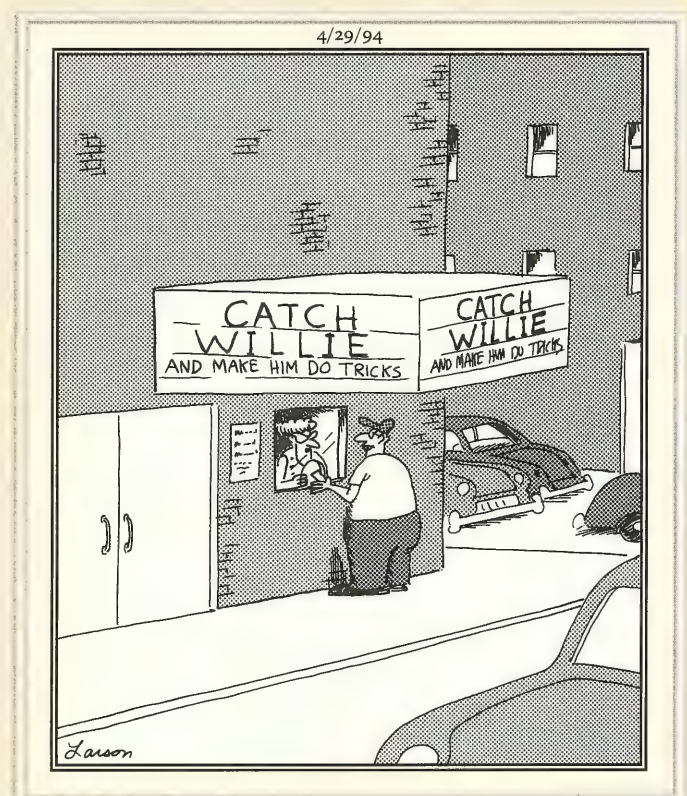
"So, Professor Sadowsky, you're saying that your fellow researcher, Professor Lazzell, knowing full well that baboons consider eye contact to be threatening, handed you this hat on that fateful day you emerged from your Serengeti campsite."



“Well, this guidebook is worthless! It just says these people worshipped two gods: one who was all-knowing and one who was all-seeing—but they don’t tell you which is which, for crying out loud!”



“Whoa! Another bad one! ... I see your severed head lying quietly in the red-stained dirt, a surprised expression still frozen in your lifeless eyes. ... Next!”

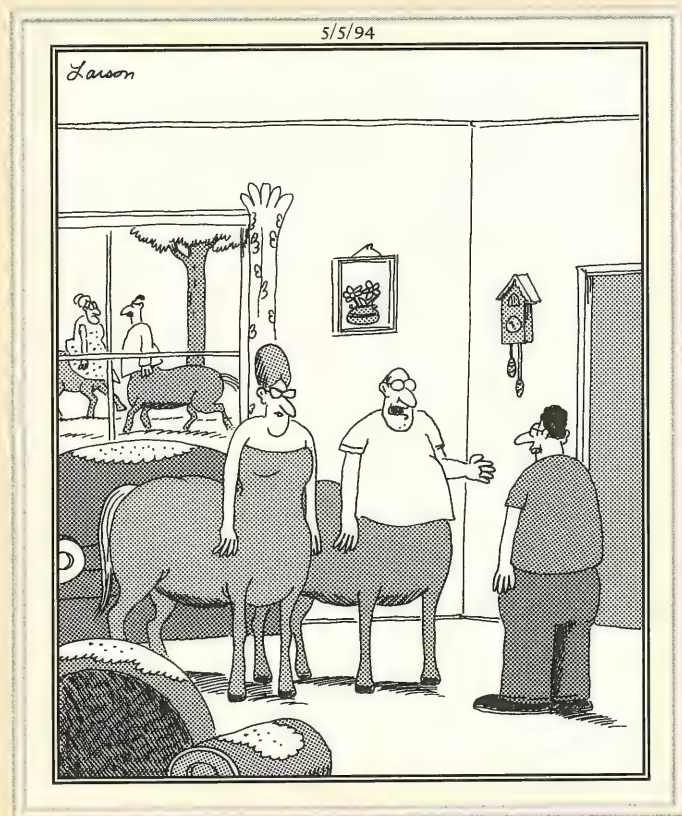
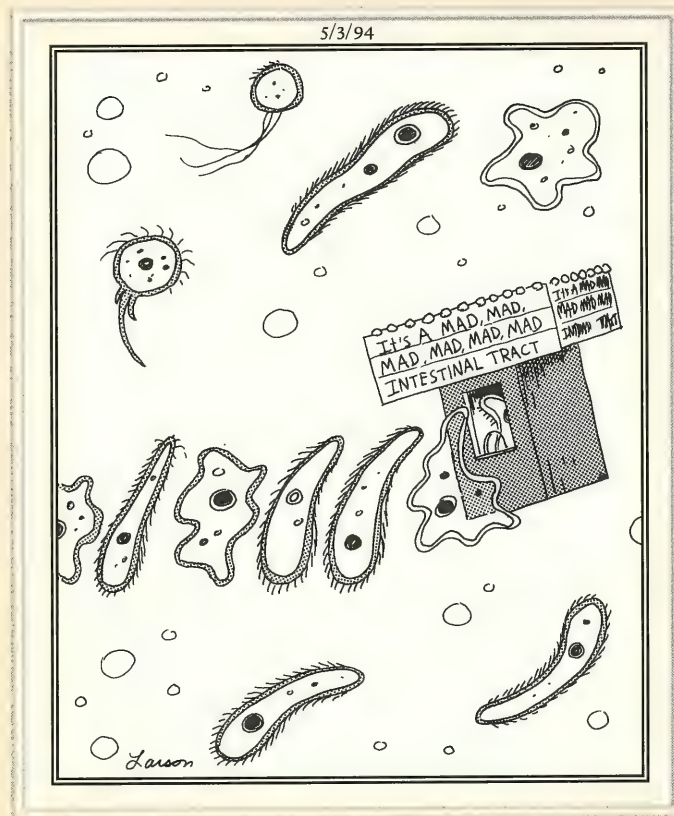




The Wildlife Management finals

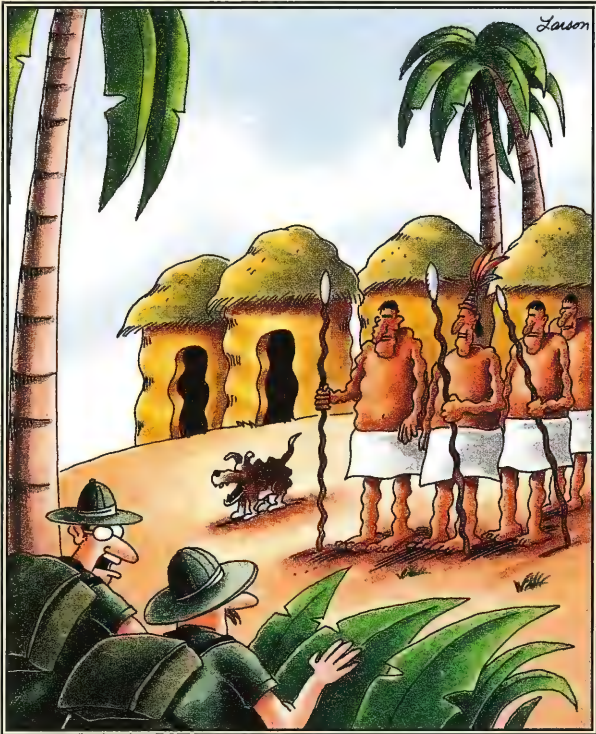


“Now, if you all would examine the chart, you will notice that—well, well ... seems Mr. Sparky has found something more engrossing than this meeting.”



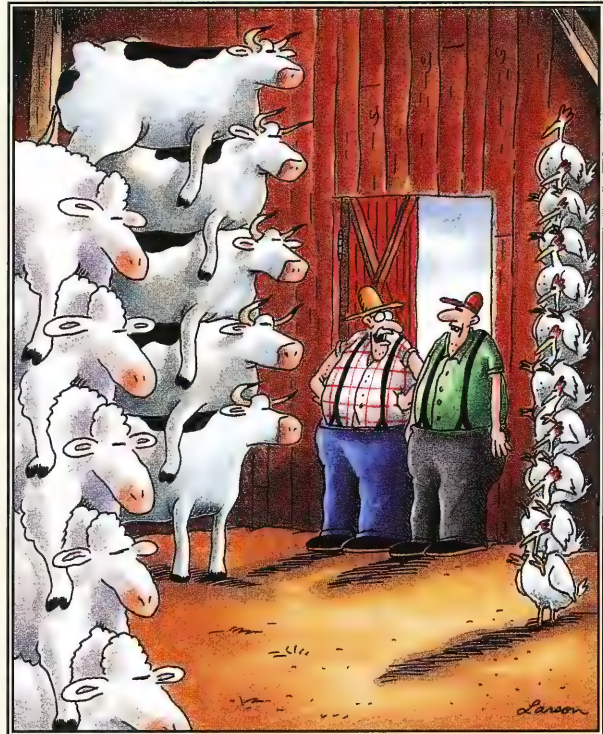
“Sorry, son, but for you to understand what happened, you have to first understand that back in the ’60s we were all taking a lot of drugs.”

5/6/94



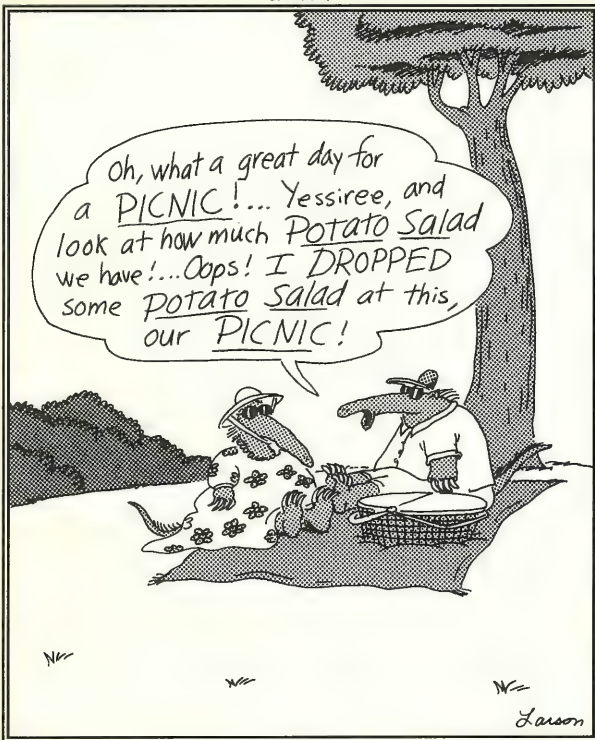
"Now watch your step, Osborne. ...
The Squiggly Line people have an inherent
distrust for all smoothliners."

5/9/94



"It's the only way to go, Frank. Why, my
life's changed, ever since I discovered
Stackable Livestock®."

5/10/94



Hunting techniques of the modern anteater

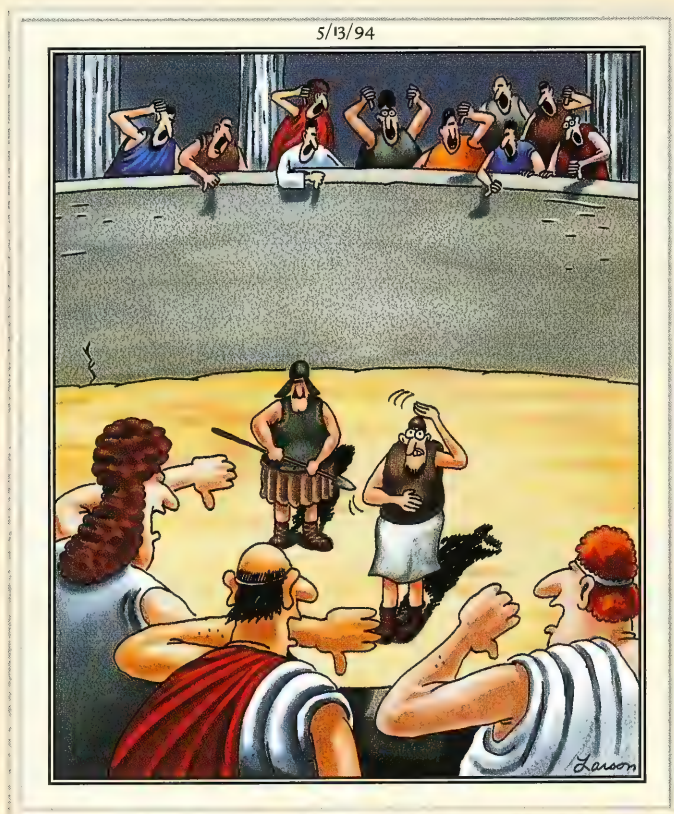
5/11/94



"The truth is, Stan, I'd like a place of my own."



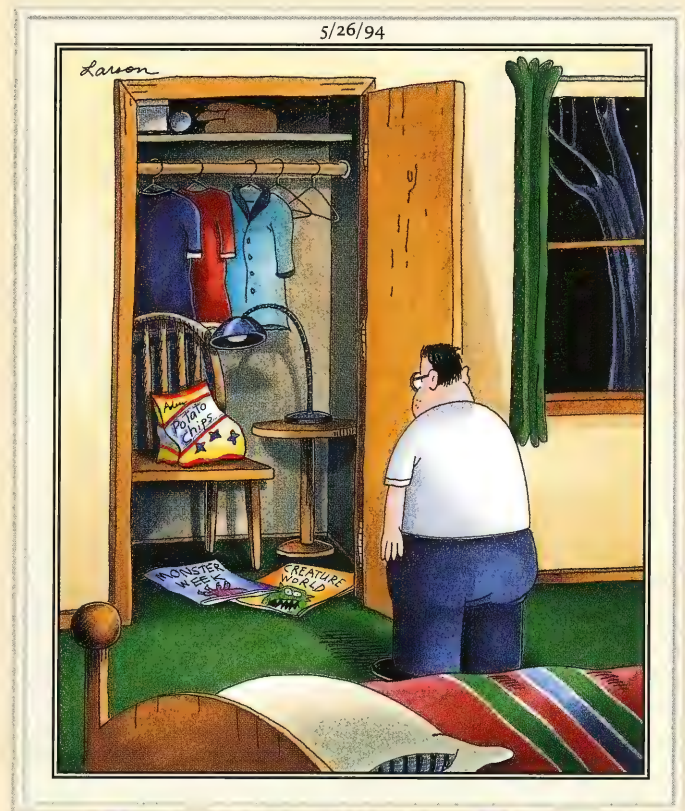
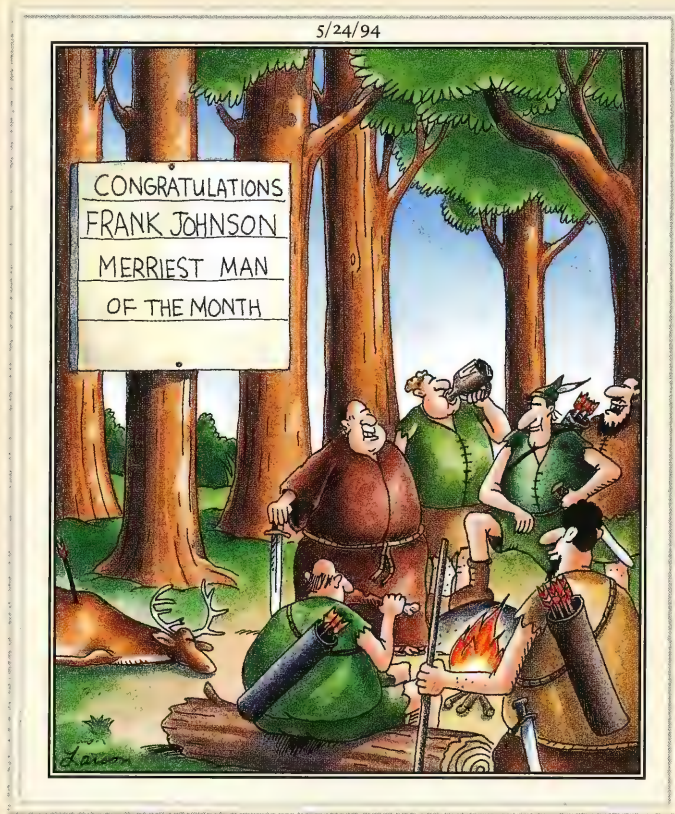
More trouble brewing



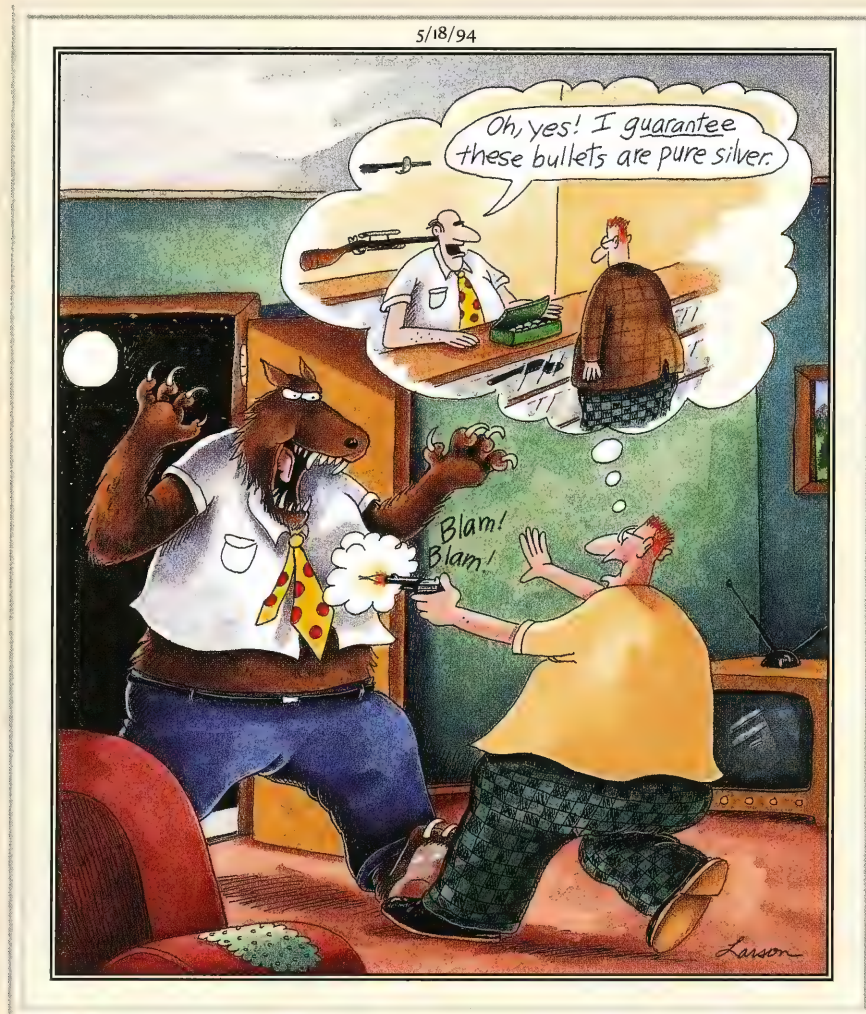
In the stadiums of ancient Rome, the most feared trial was the rub-your-stomach-and-pat-your-head-at-the-same-time event.



"My God, Carlson! After years of searching, this is an emotional moment for me! ... Voilà! I give you the Secret Elephant Breeding Grounds!"

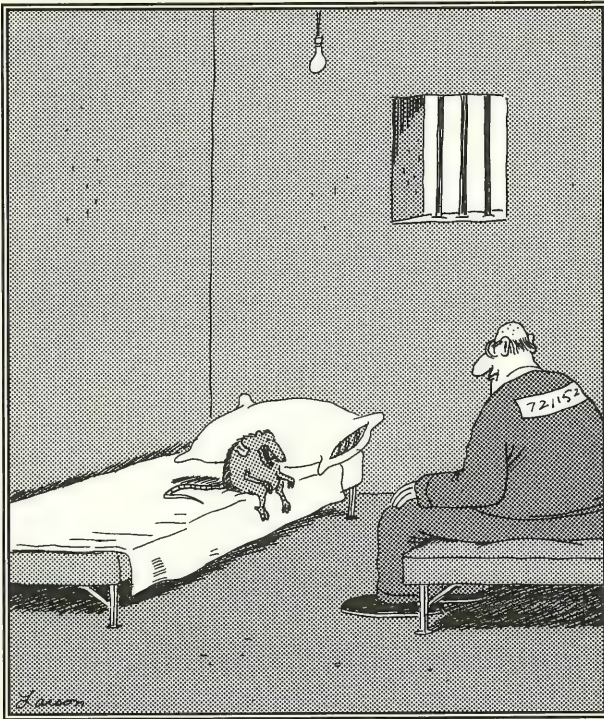


For the time being, the monster wasn't in Ricky's closet. For the time being.



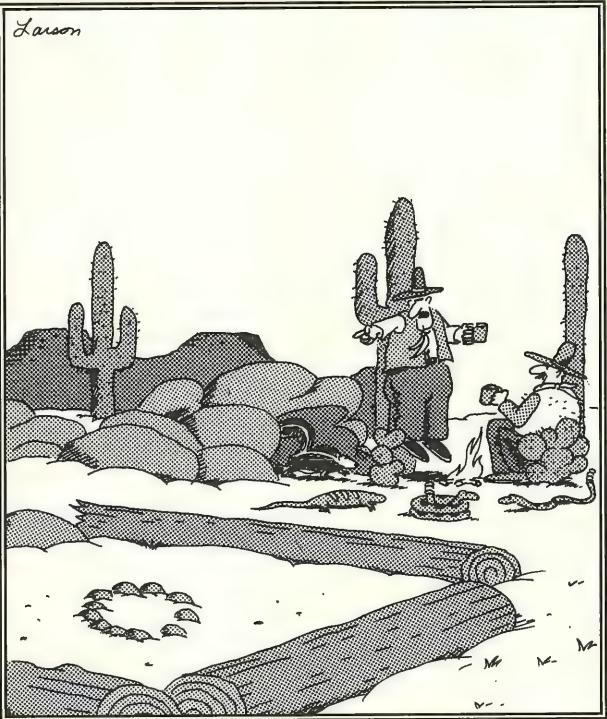
Moments before he was ripped to shreds, Edgar vaguely recalled having seen that same obnoxious tie earlier in the day.

5/16/94



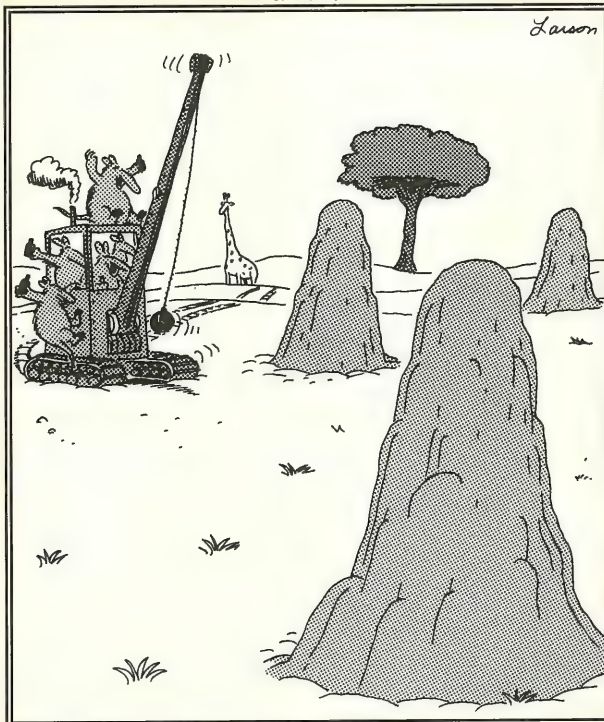
"I *would* have gotten away scot-free if I had just gotten rid of the evidence. ... But, shoot—I'm a pack rat."

5/17/94



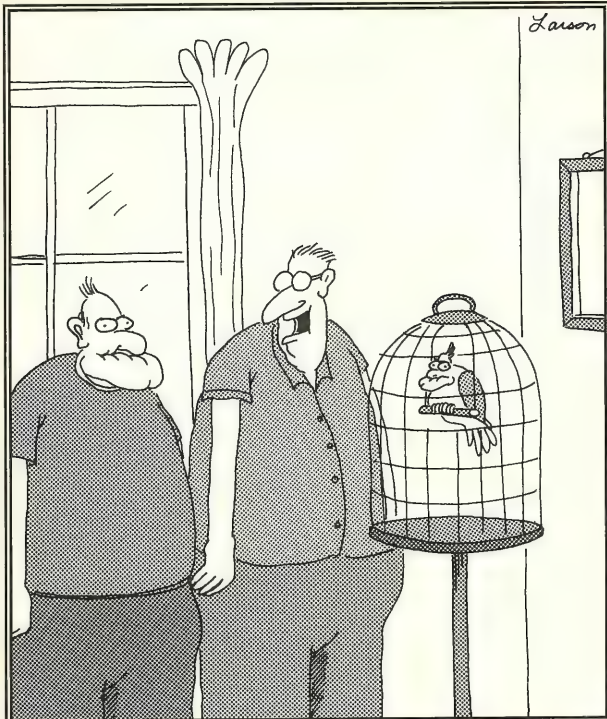
"Oh, man, Clem! To add insult to injury, I see a great campsite right over yonder."

5/20/94

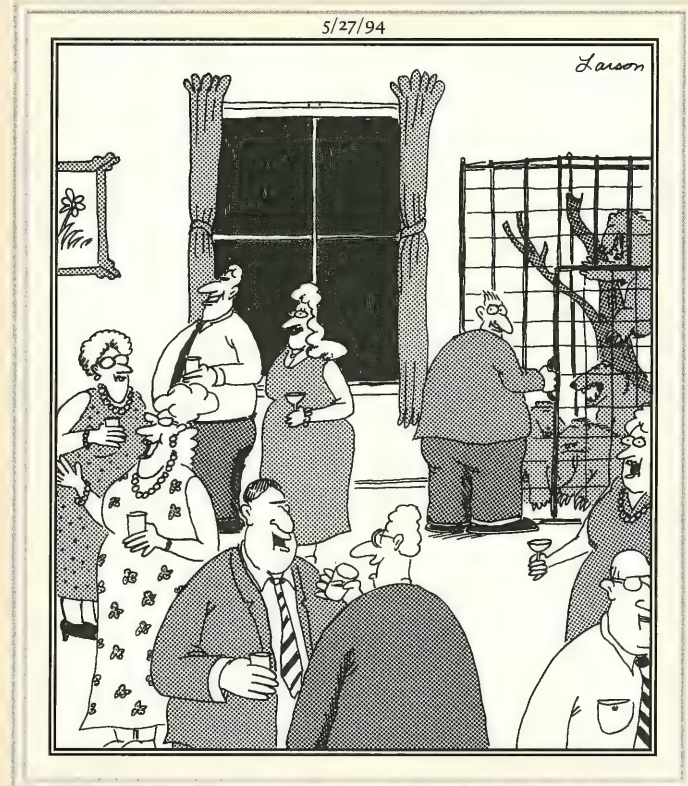
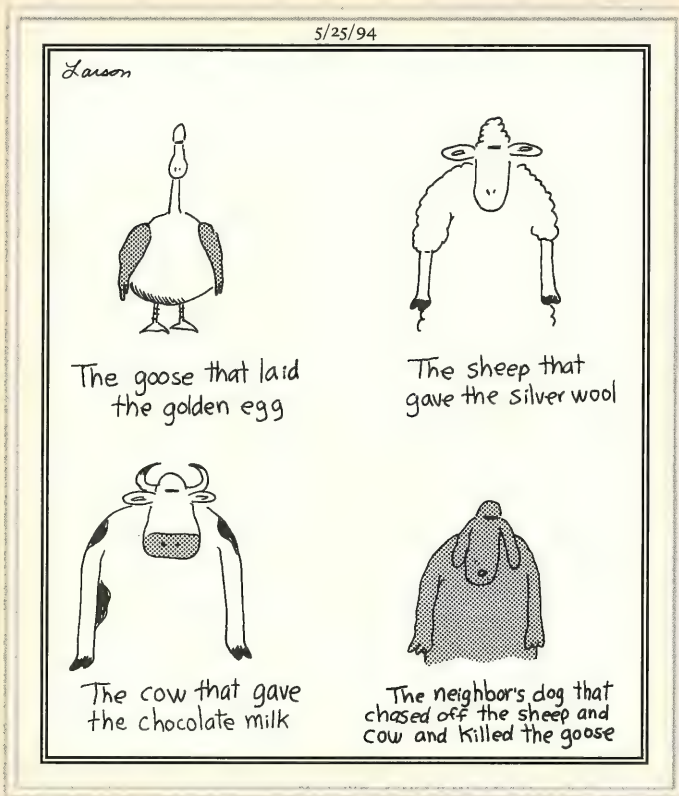


Like frozen sentries of the Serengeti, the century-old termite mounds had withstood all tests of time and foe—all tests, that is, except the one involving drunken aardvarks and a stolen wrecking ball.

5/19/94



"Boy, Henry ... he really *can* do you!"



The party was going along splendidly—and then Morty opened the door to the wolverine display.



"Hey, we'll be lucky if we ever sell this place! ... Well, it's like everyone says—location, location, location."



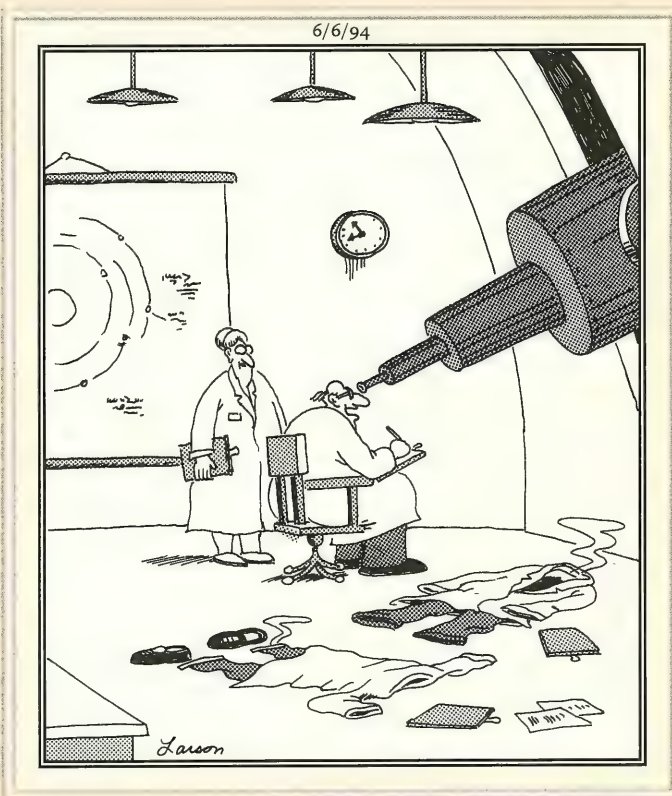
"So George says, 'I'm goin' over there and tellin' that guy to shut that equipment off!'... So I said: 'George, that guy's a mad scientist. Call the cops. Don't go over there alone.'... Well, you know George."



History shmistory



Mexico City, Christmas morning, 1837:
Santa Anna's son, Juan, receives the original
Davy Crockett hat.

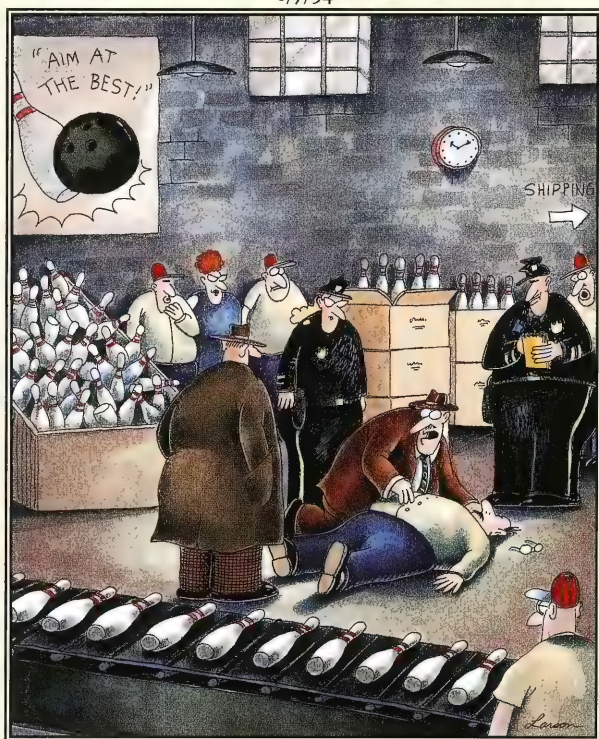


"First that cretin Foster and now that jerk
Cummings has instantly evaporated! ... I tell you,
Ms. Goodman, without a doubt, I'm looking at
an authentic, full-fledged wishing star!"



"Say. ... It's only a *paper* moon."

6/7/94



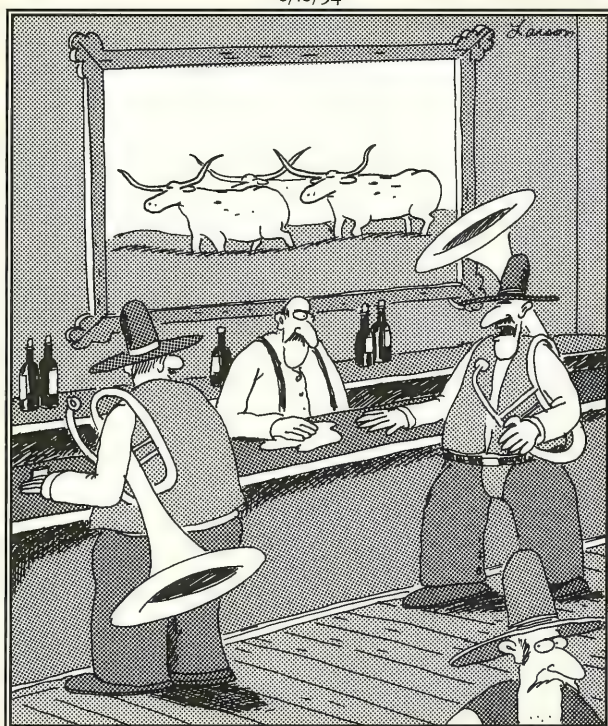
"Struck from behind, all right ... and from my first examination of the wound, I'd say this was done by some kind of heavy, blunt object."

6/13/94



Humboys

6/10/94



"So, they tell me you fancy yourself a tuba player."

6/14/94



"You know, you and I could make primitive music together."

6/9/94

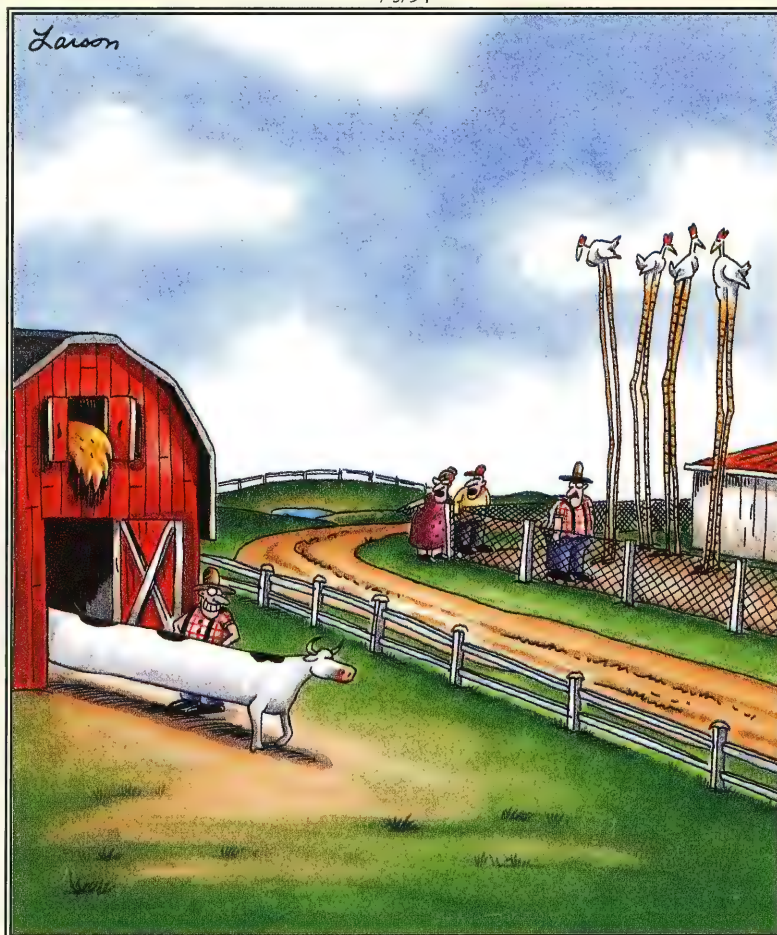


"Well, actually, Doreen, I rather resent being called a 'swamp thing.'... I prefer the term 'wetlands-challenged-mutant.'"

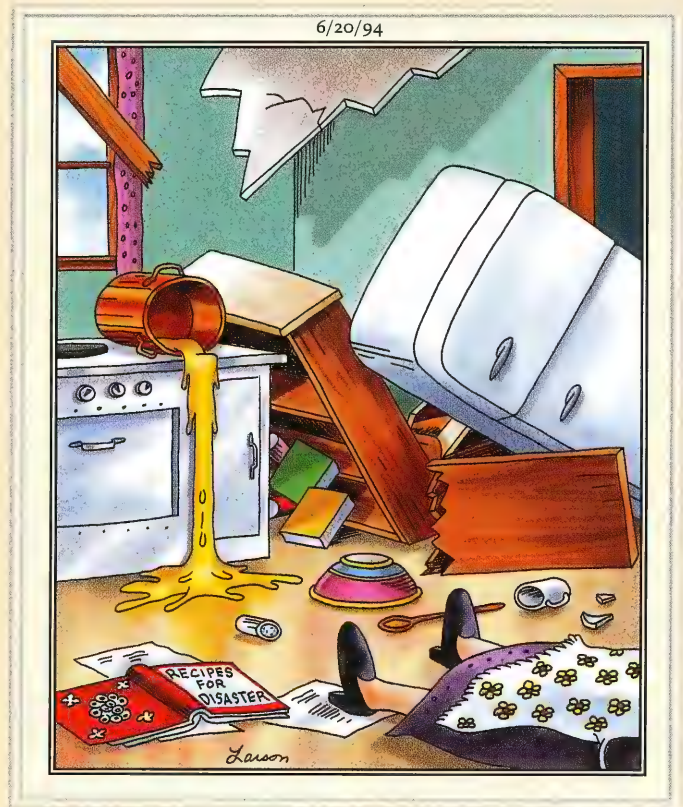
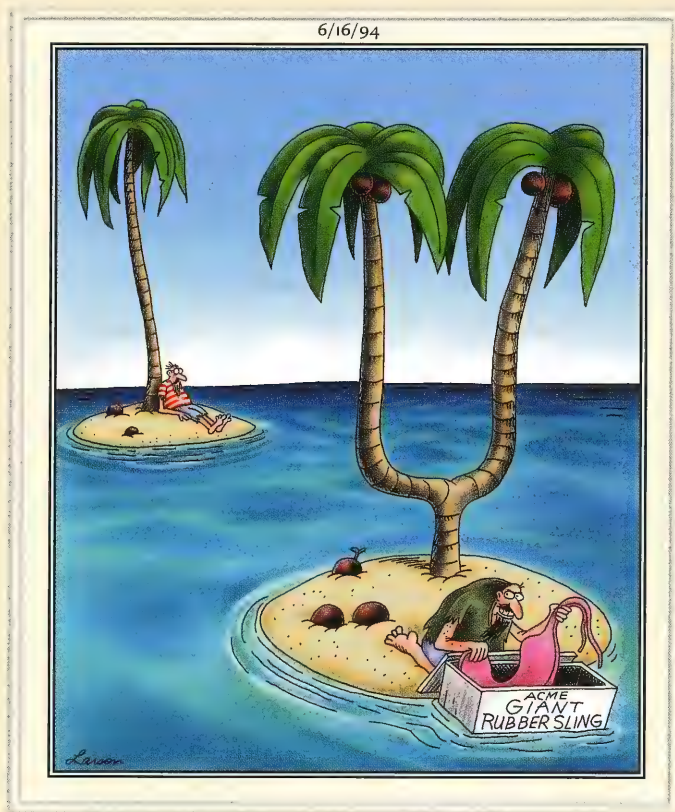
6/8/94



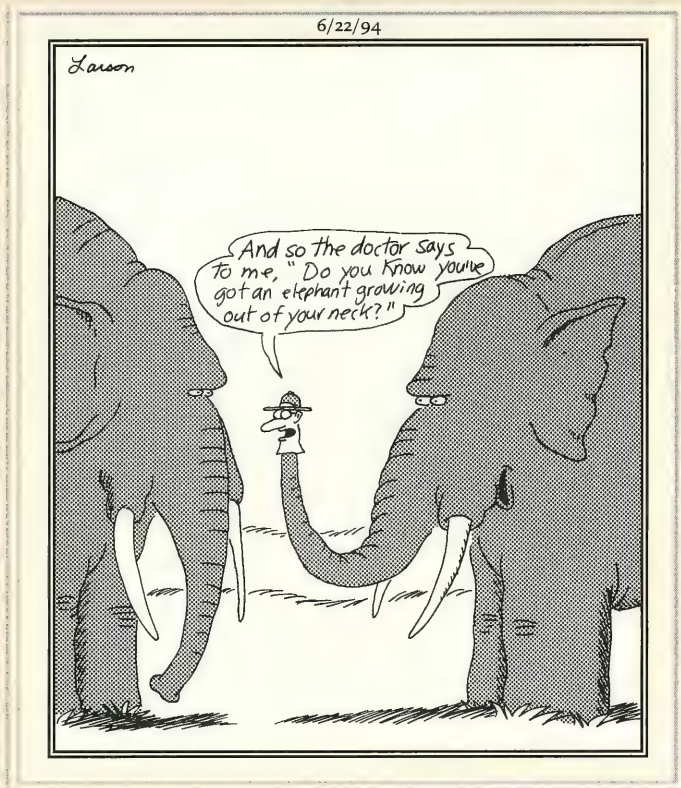
6/15/94



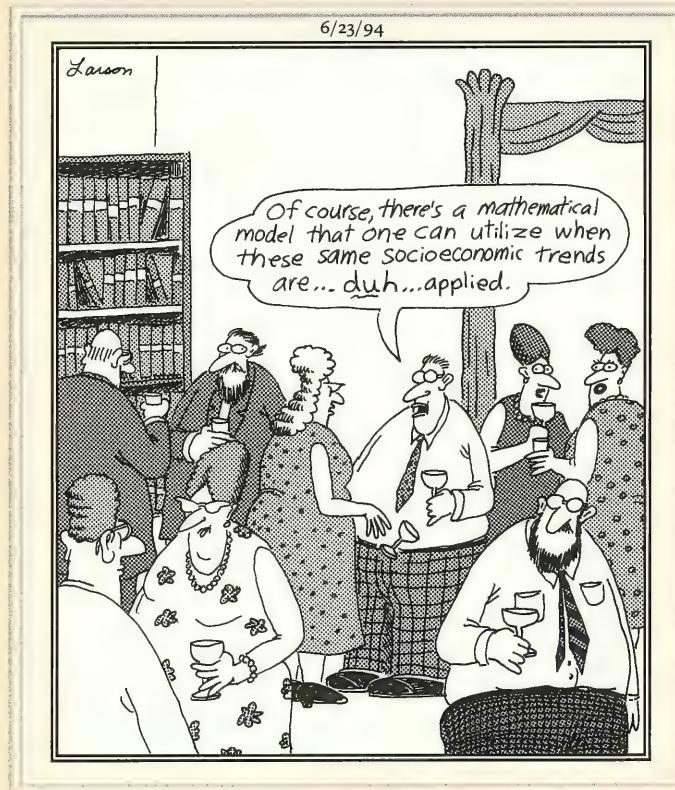
For a long time, Farmer Hansen and his tall chickens enjoyed immense popularity—until Farmer Sutton got himself a longcow.



In an effort to show off, the monster would sometimes stand on his head.



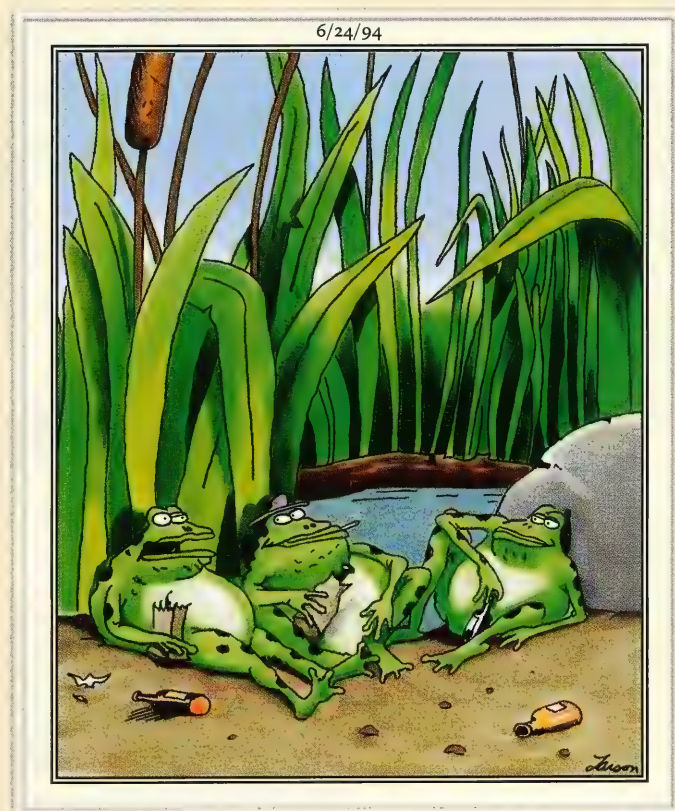
When things got slow in the midday heat, Arnie would often break out his trunk puppet.



Suddenly the Mensa partygoers froze when Clarence shockingly uttered the "D" word.



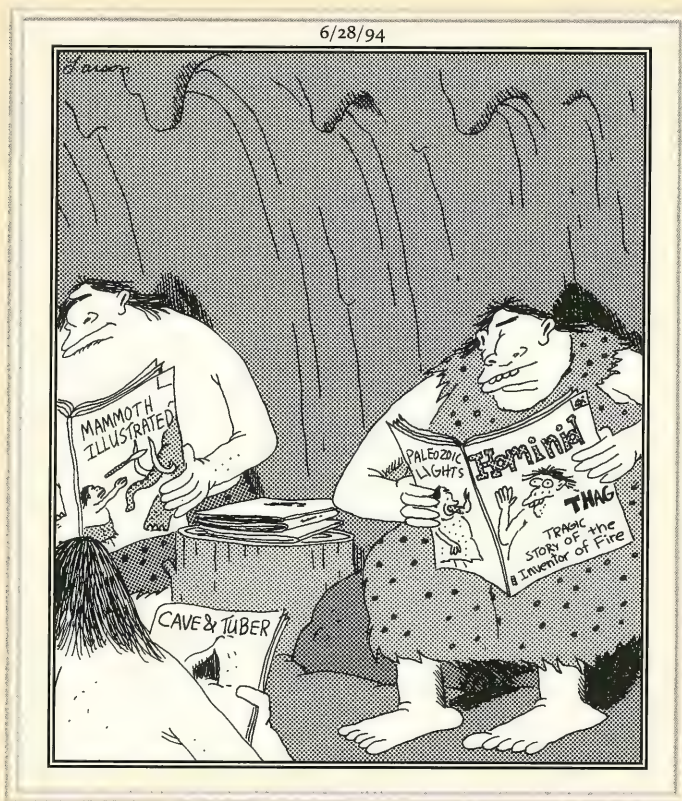
"It's a buzzard picnic, son—and you best remember to never take a look-see inside one of them baskets."



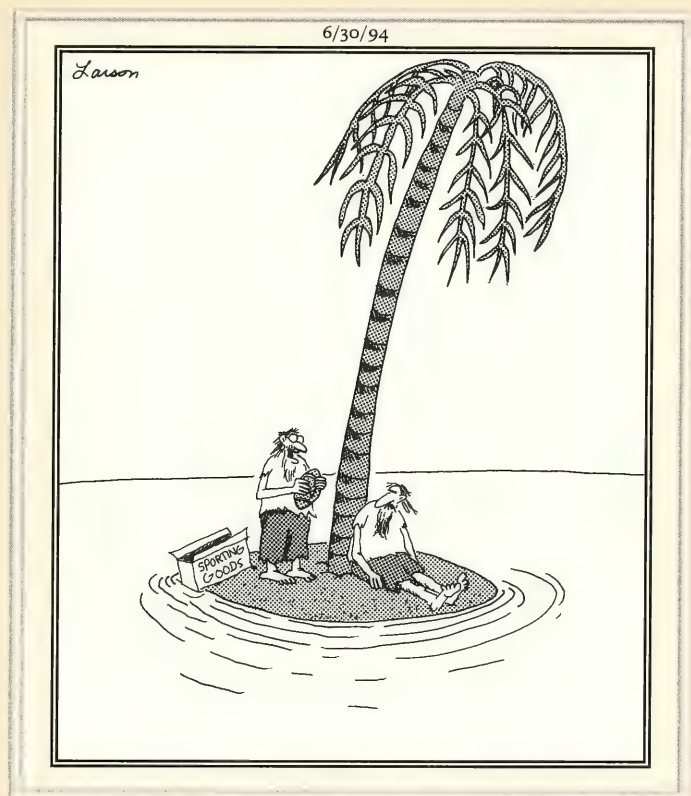
"Yeah. I remember Jerry. Good friend of mine. ... You know, I never understood a single word he said, but he always had some mighty fine wine."



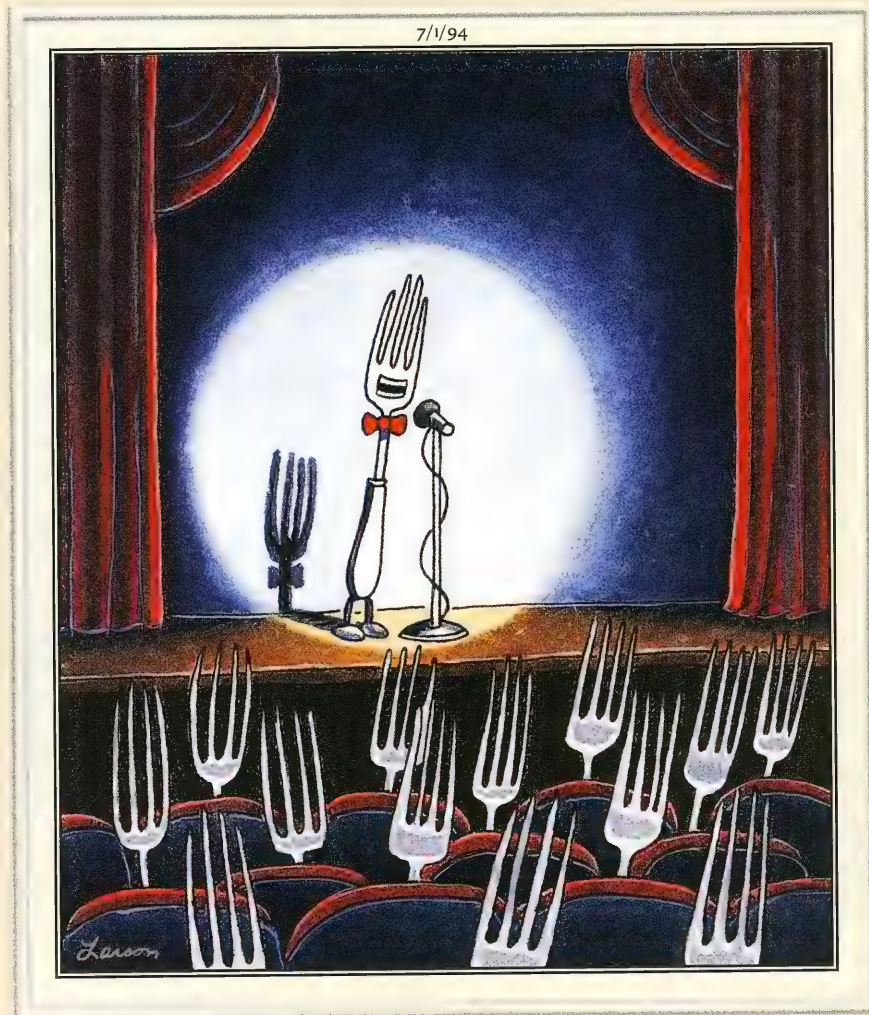
"Face it, Fred—you're lost."



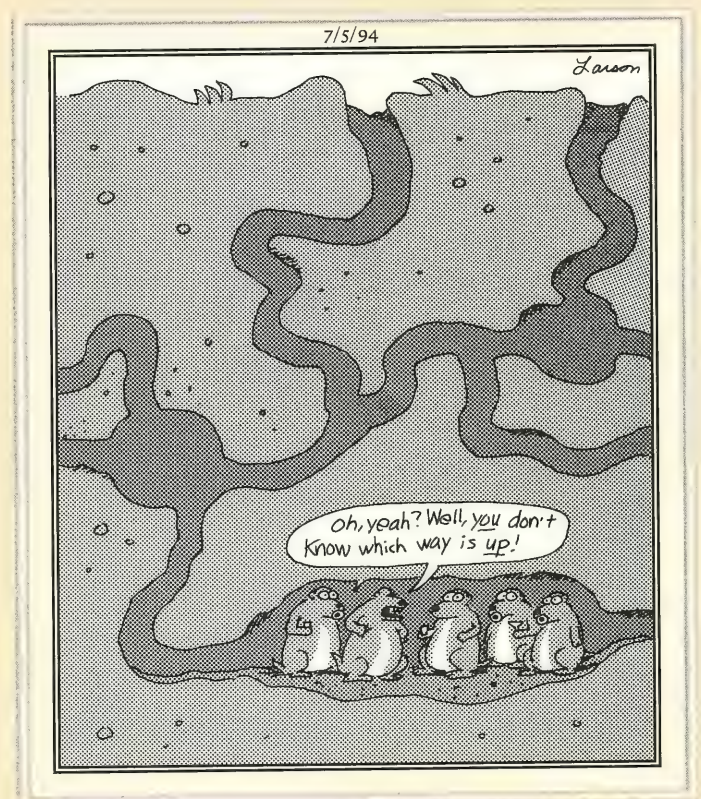
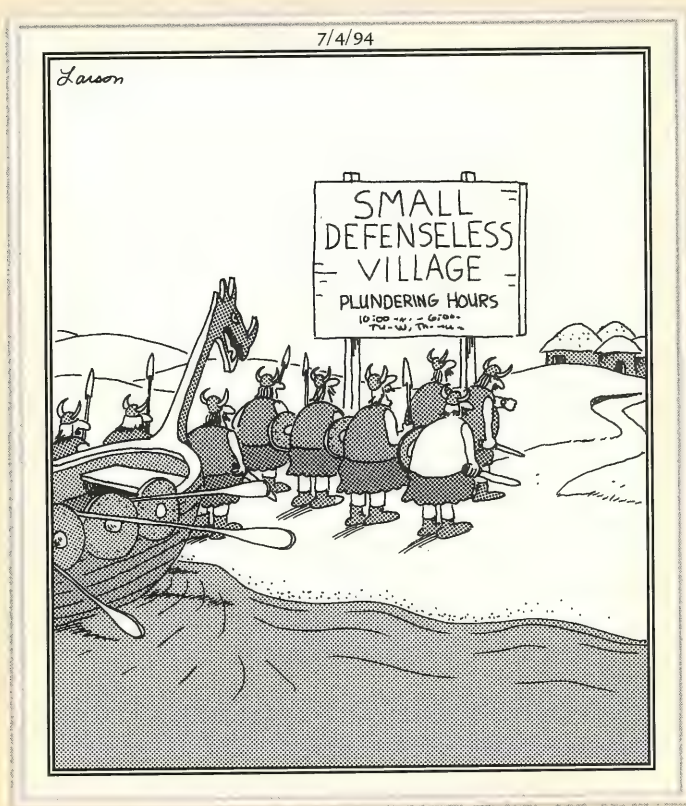
Primitive waiting rooms



"Hey, Jim—go out for a short one!"

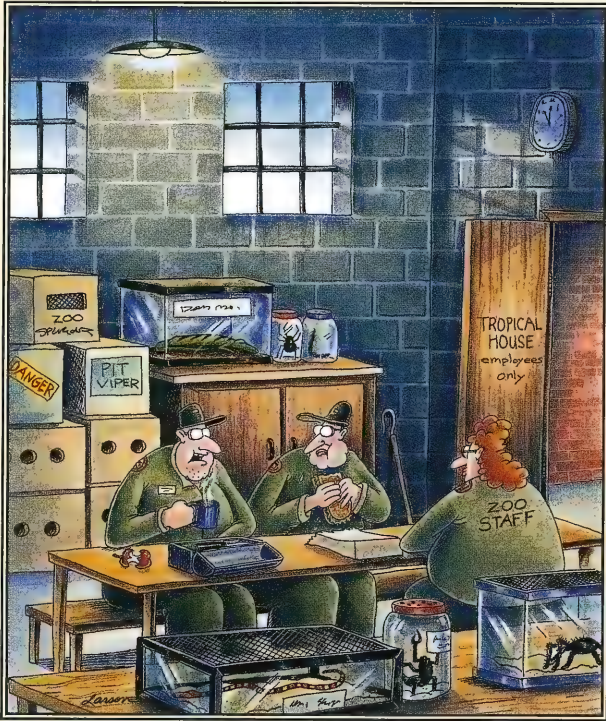


“... And so the bartender says, ‘Hey! That’s not a soup spoon!’... But seriously, forks ...”



The ultimate gopher insult

7/6/94



"Okay, here's one, Marv: What's got 12 legs, six eyes, a hairy thorax, was found dead in its display case this morning, and goes 'crunch' inside a submarine sandwich?"

7/12/94



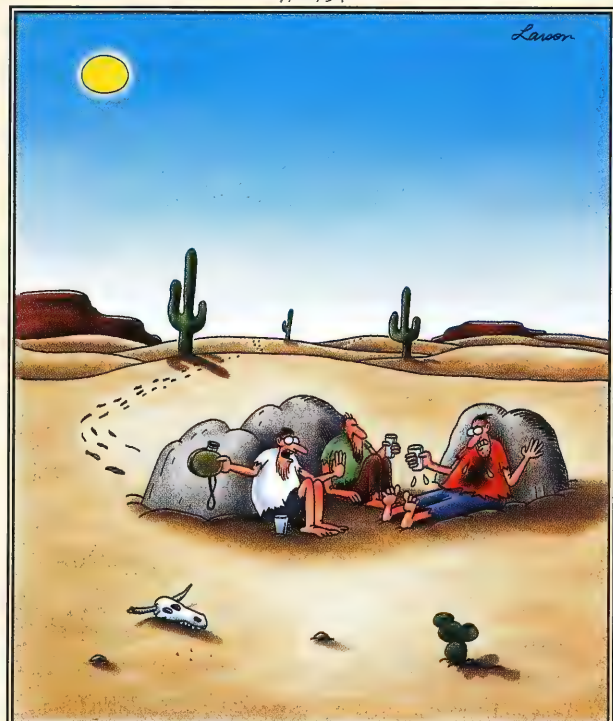
"I'm sorry, Delores—I didn't think you'd truly ever leave! ... But where will you go?"

7/14/94



"Yeah, I just got back! And the wizard I mentioned? He gave me a new brain! ... It's on the coffee table as we speak!"

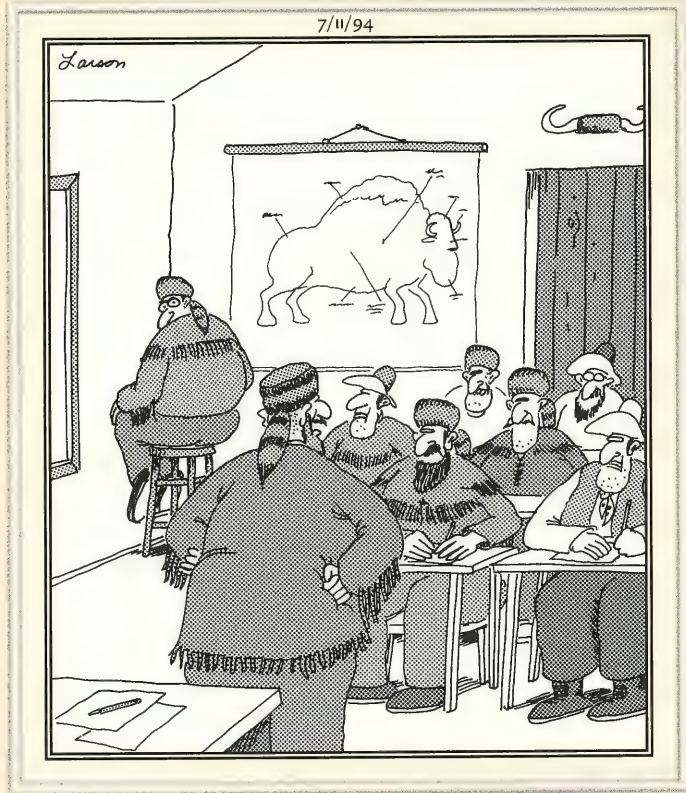
7/20/94



"Sorry, Virgil—that's all you get. ... I don't know how you got hold of a dribble glass in the first place, but it's just your bad luck."



Scene from *Dog Invaders from Mars*



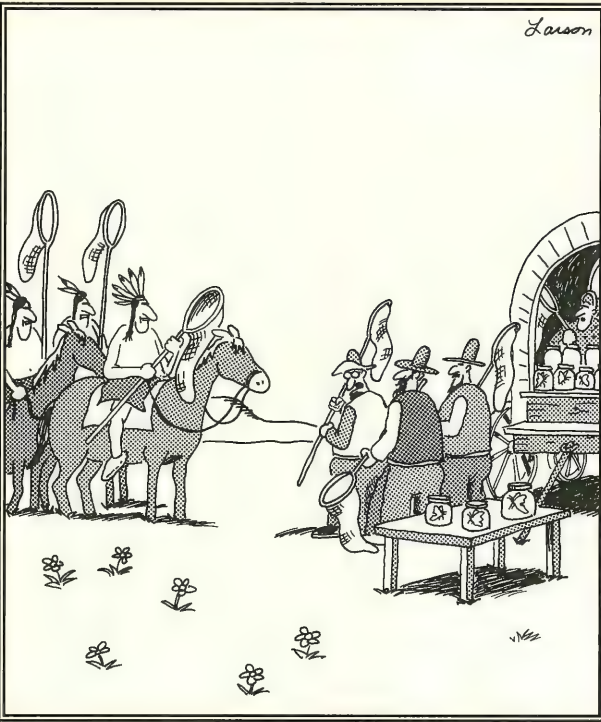
“Anybody else? ... This here’s a school for *buffalo* hunters—and anyone who so much as utters the word ‘bison’ can join Morgenstern in the corner!”



Executioner understudies

7/15/94

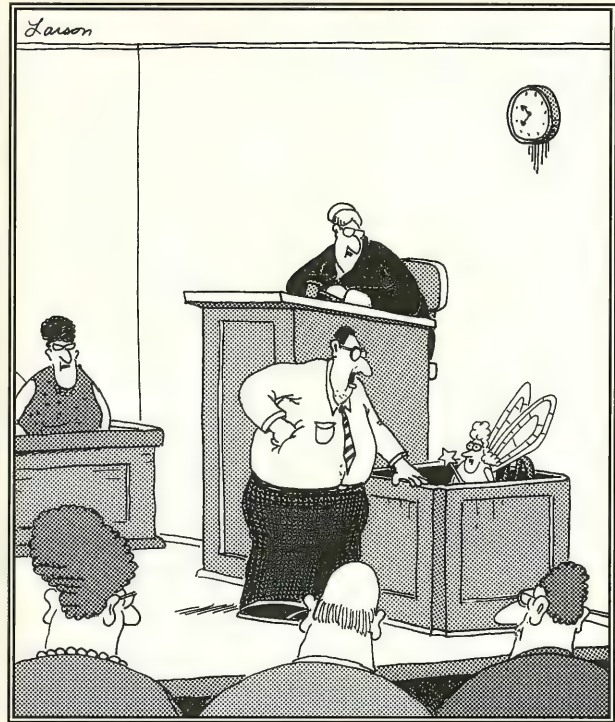
Larson



"Everyone just keep your nets real still. ... They'll just wanna look over our jars, and we best not try to stop 'em."

7/18/94

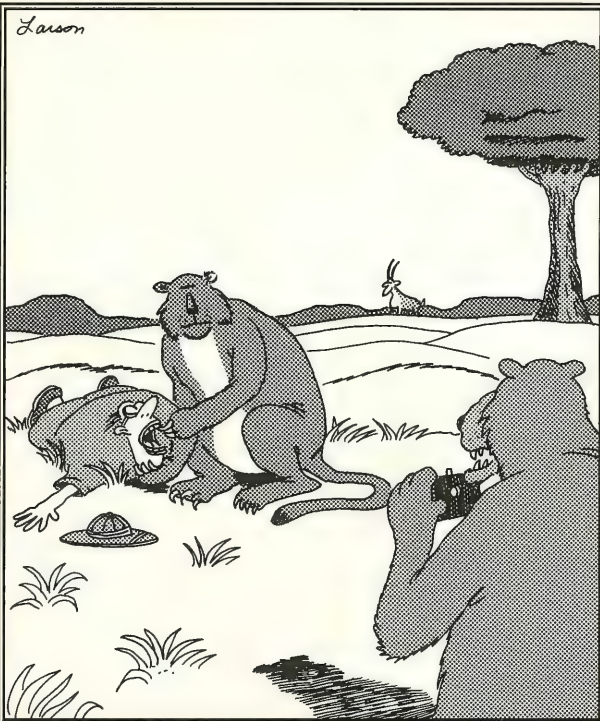
Larson



"Well, first you say you saw the defendant at the scene and now you say you *think* you saw him! ... Let's cut to the chase, Ms. Sunbeam—is it possible your entire testimony is nothing more than a mere fairy tale?"

7/19/94

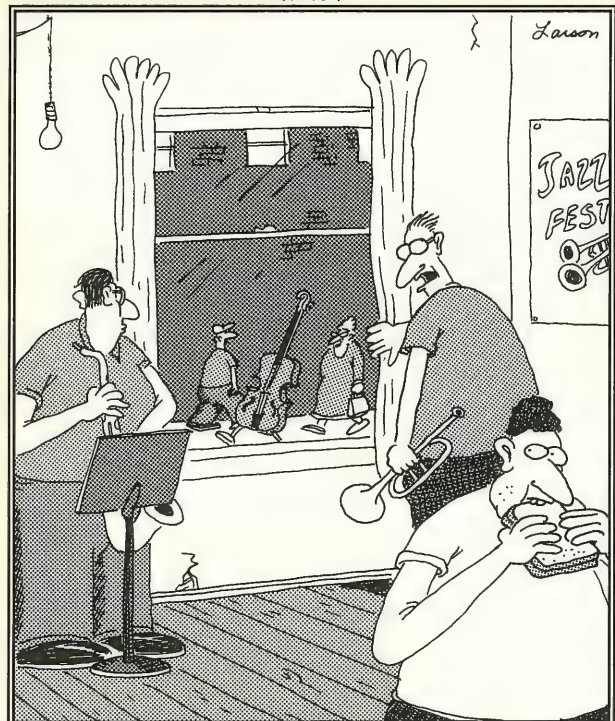
Larson



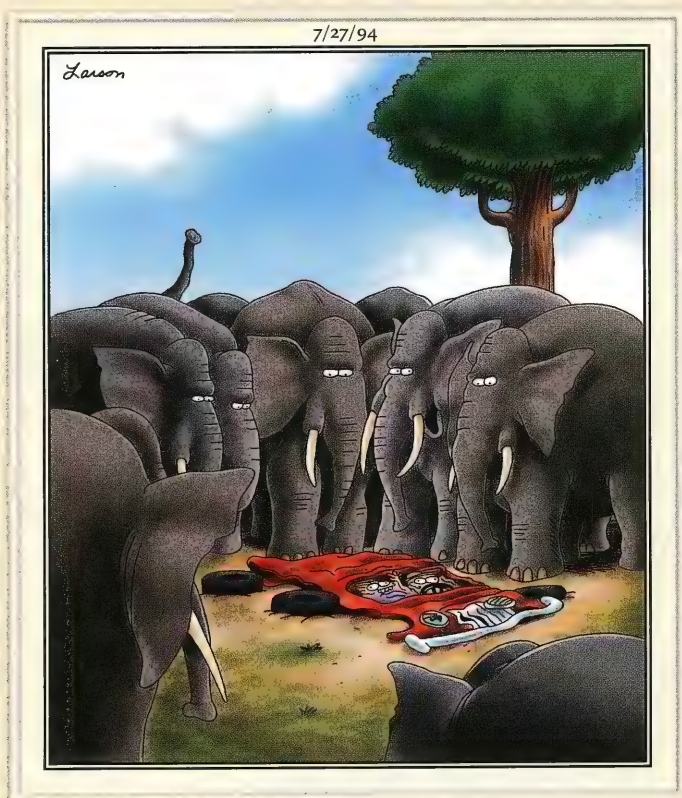
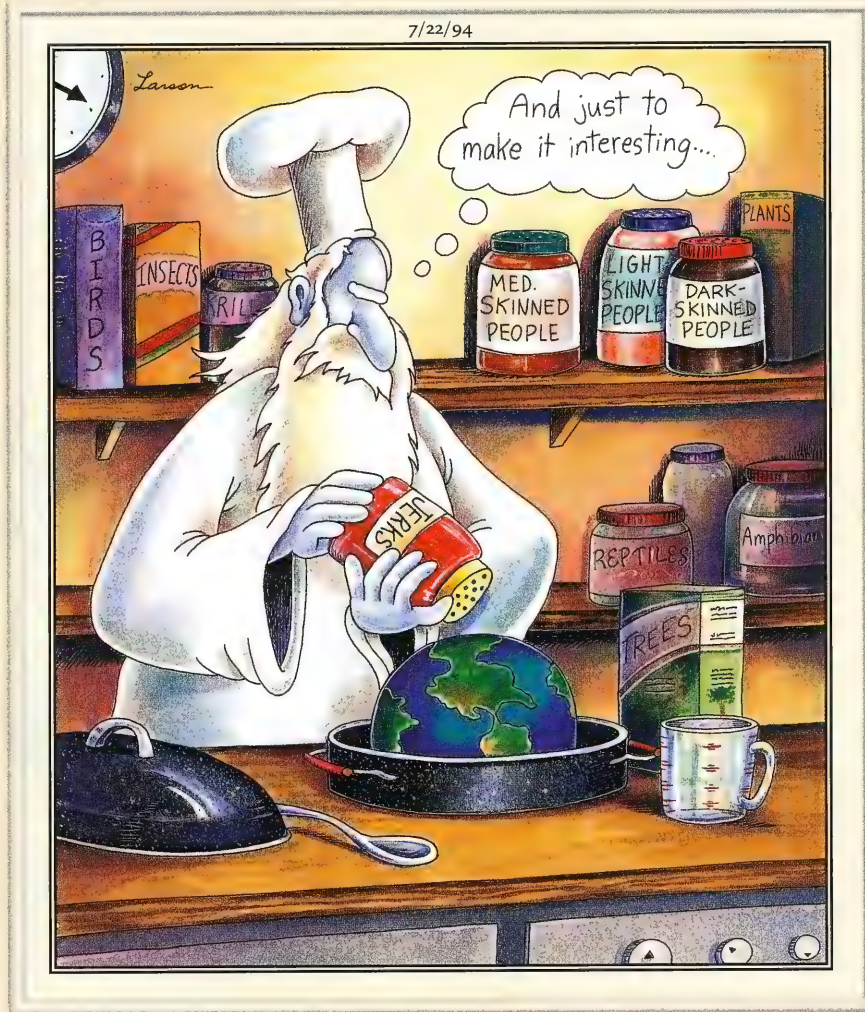
"That's just not impressive, Doris. ... The brain! Hold up the big brain!"

7/21/94

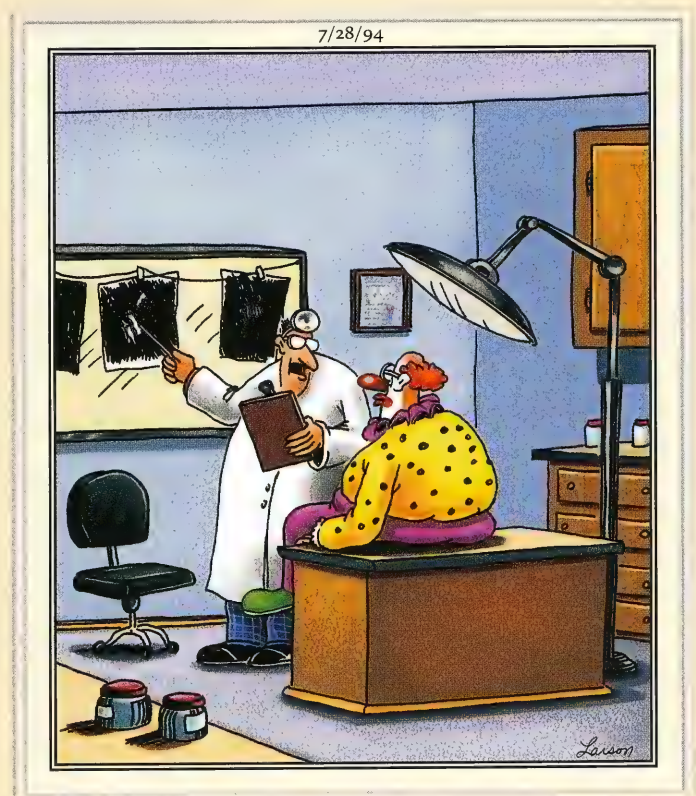
Larson



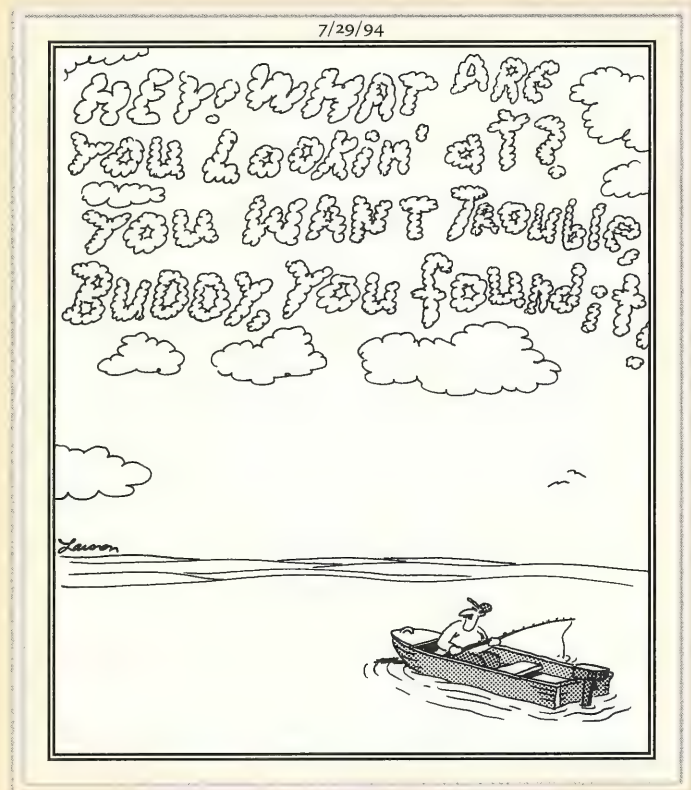
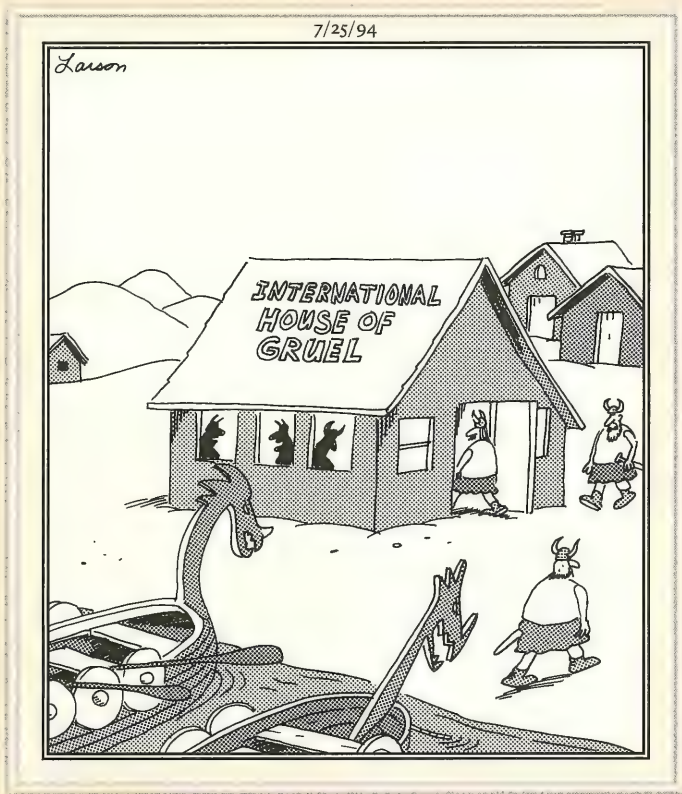
"Hey, Leon! Your bass sure is walking *now*!"



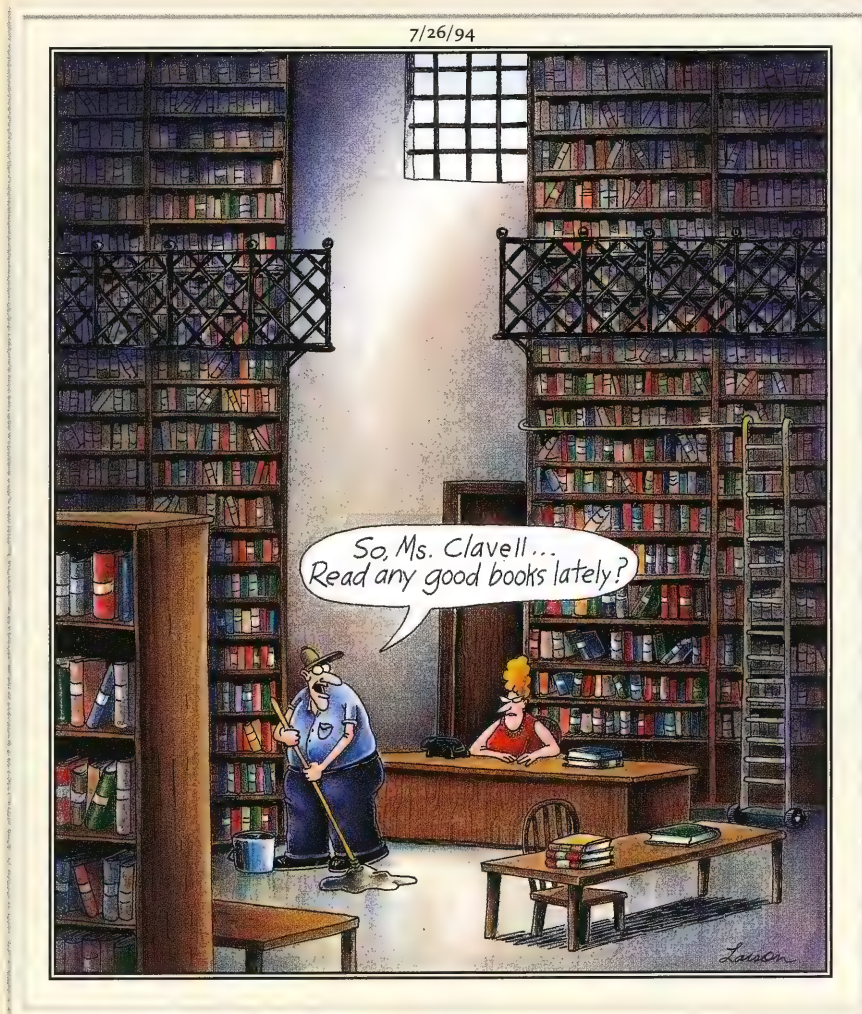
"You know, sometimes I sort of enjoy this herd mentality."



"It's worse than I first suspected, Mr. Binkley—you don't even *have* a funny bone."



Understanding only German, Fritz was unaware that the clouds were becoming threatening.



After years of harboring his secret desires, Ned finally hits on the senior librarian.

8/2/94



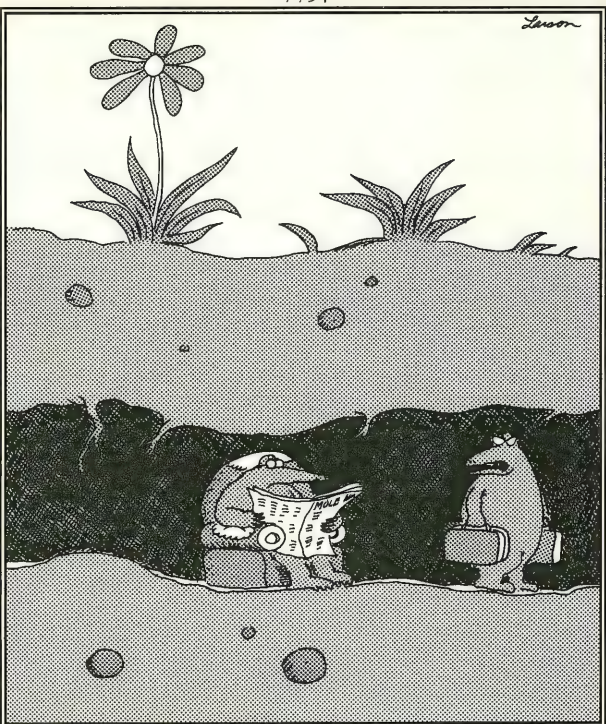
Hellbillies

8/3/94



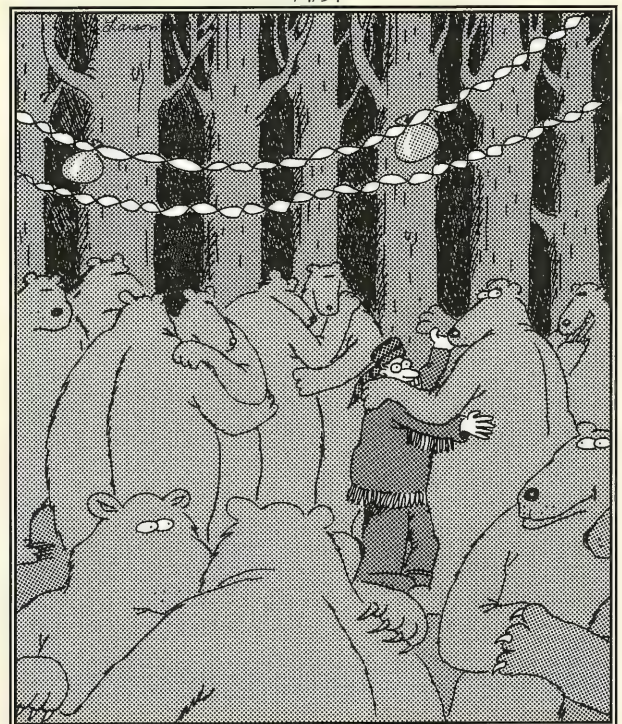
"And you! What's *your* story? ... If you ain't a mutineer, then what the hell are you?"

8/1/94



"I'm leaving you, Mitchell. You've never had tunnel vision and you never will."

8/4/94



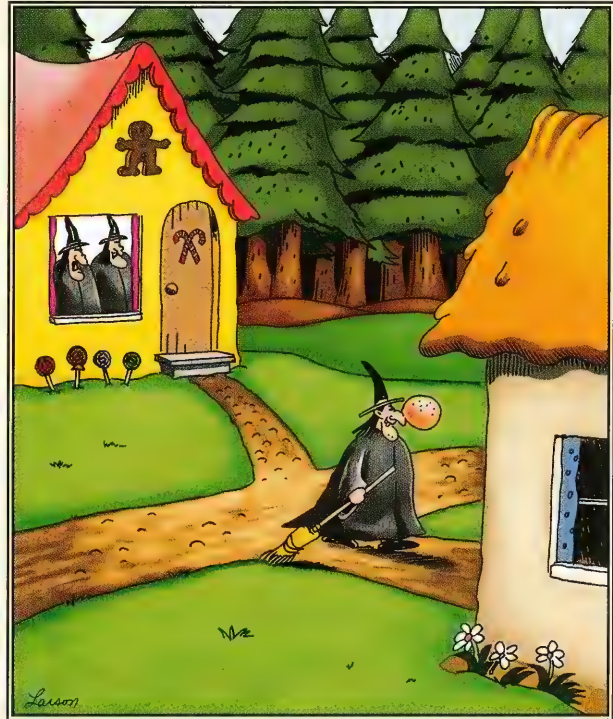
At the Grizzly Ball, only Alice, with her kind heart, would not refuse to dance with Adams.

8/8/94



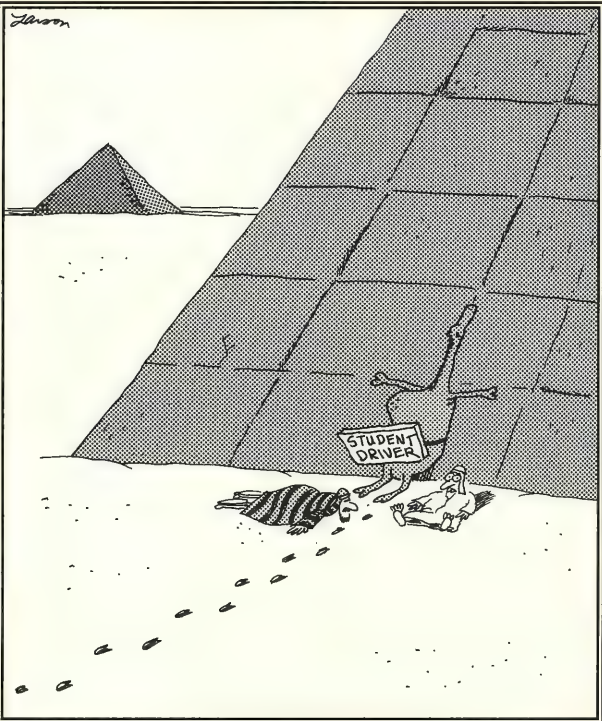
"I'm afraid you misunderstood. ... I said I'd like a mango."

8/9/94



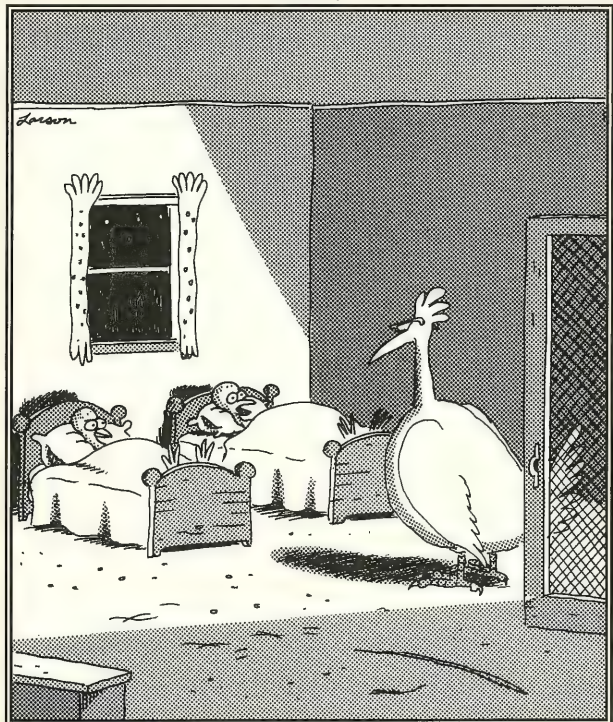
"Well, Griselda's back from the plastic surgeon's. ... Whoa! Look at the size of that wart!"

8/5/94



Abdul flunks

8/10/94



"No way was it me, Mom—you must've heard a peep out of Eddie."

8/11/94



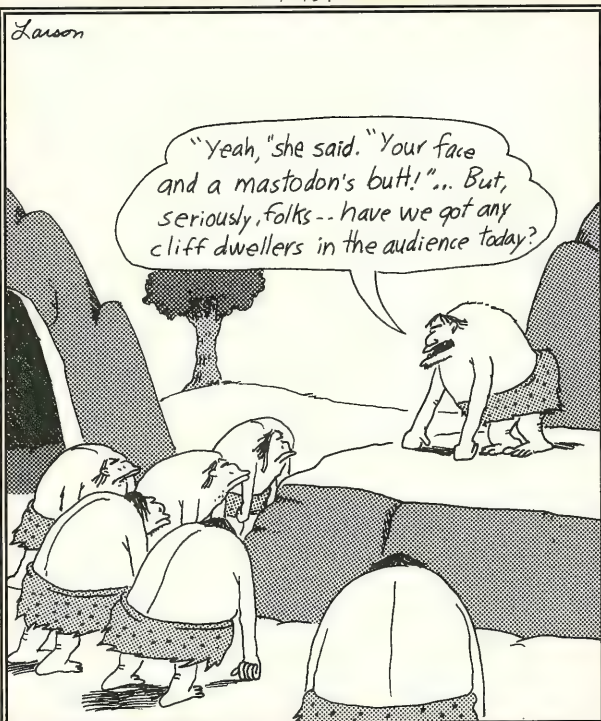
Once again, a meeting between management and the Plutonium Truckers' Union grows tense.

8/12/94



In its more horrific method of retribution, the mob will sometimes dress victims as mimes, place them in glass boxes, and let them perish slowly in full view of the public.

8/16/94



Stand-semi-erect comedy

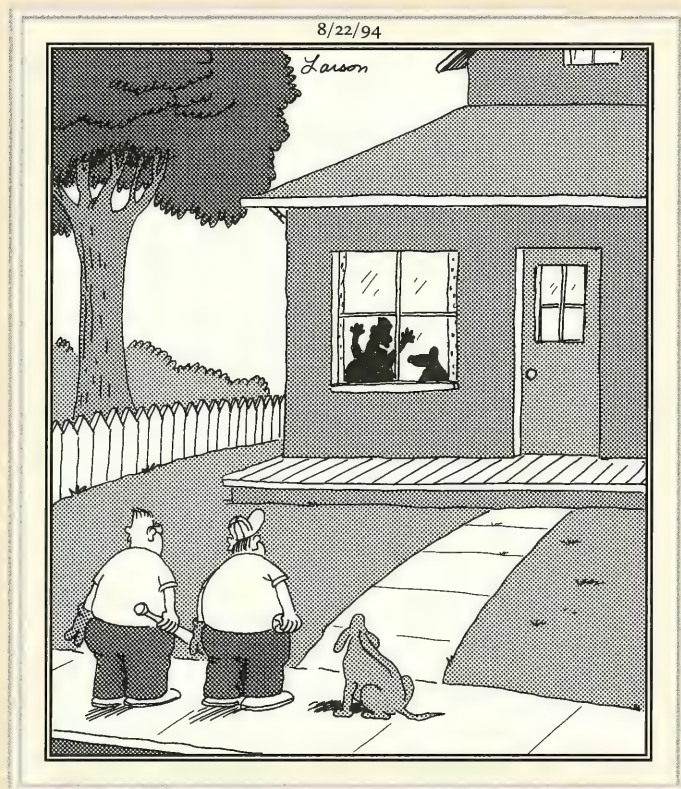
8/17/94



In ancient Rome, it was tough for the guys who worked in the vomitoriums to get dates.



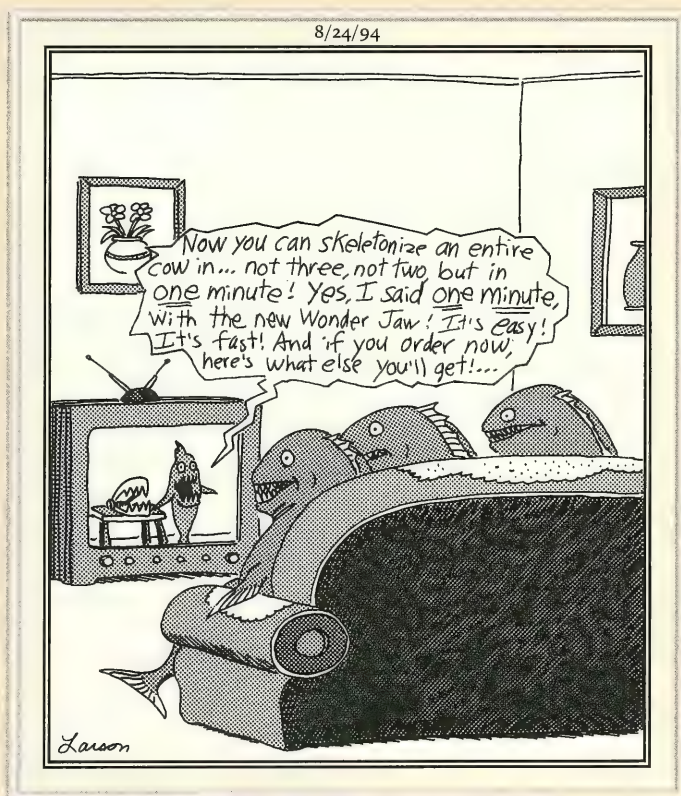
"Oh, they'll find something for you real soon. ...
Me? I'm forever blowing bubbles."



Every Saturday morning, while his playmates
patiently waited, little Normy Bates would
always take a few extra minutes to yell
at his "dog."



At the Cowboy Wax Museum



8/15/94



8/19/94



"I make no claims about all my success, Bernard.
I never went to school, I never worked hard,
and I'm not particularly bright. ...
I'm just a lucky skunk, Bernard."

8/25/94



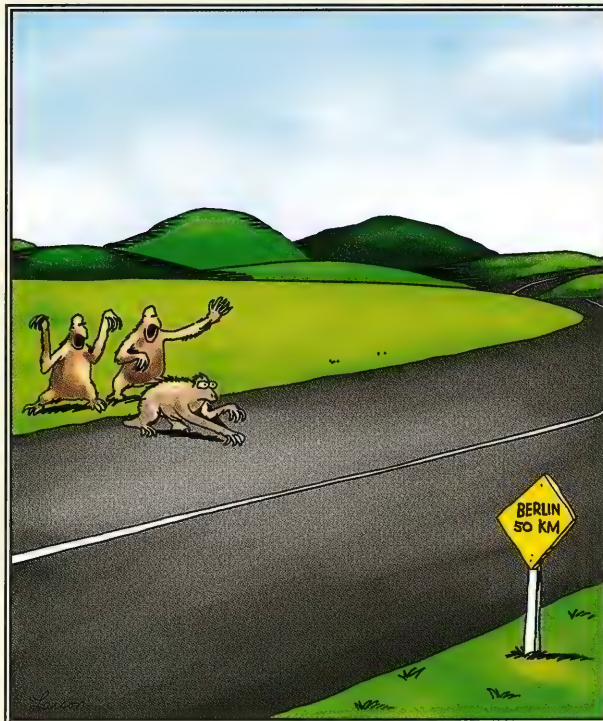
In their final year, all research science students are required to take one semester of Maniacal Laughter.

8/26/94



Bunker Hill, June 17, 1775: An unfortunate twist of fate for one young redcoat, Charles "Bugeyed" Bingham, was not knowing that the opposing American general had just uttered the historic command, "Don't fire until you see the whites of their eyes."

8/31/94



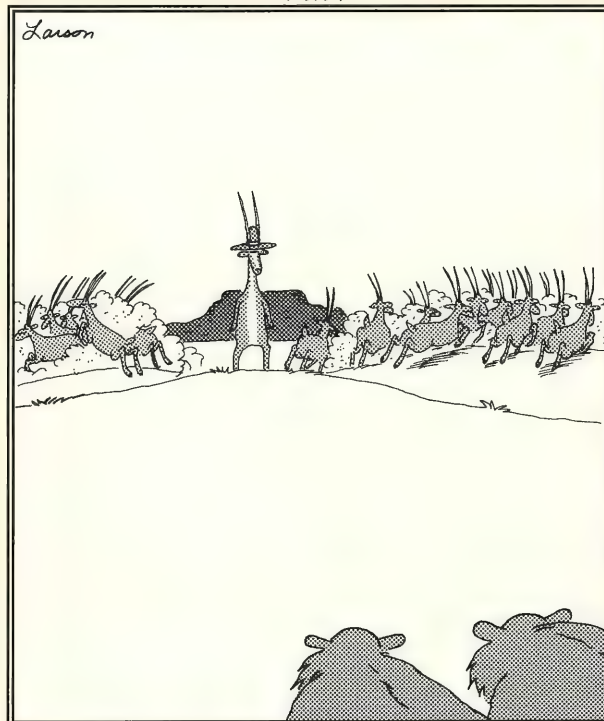
In the longest hour of his life, Morty takes the dare of his sloth buddies and crosses the Autobahn.

8/30/94



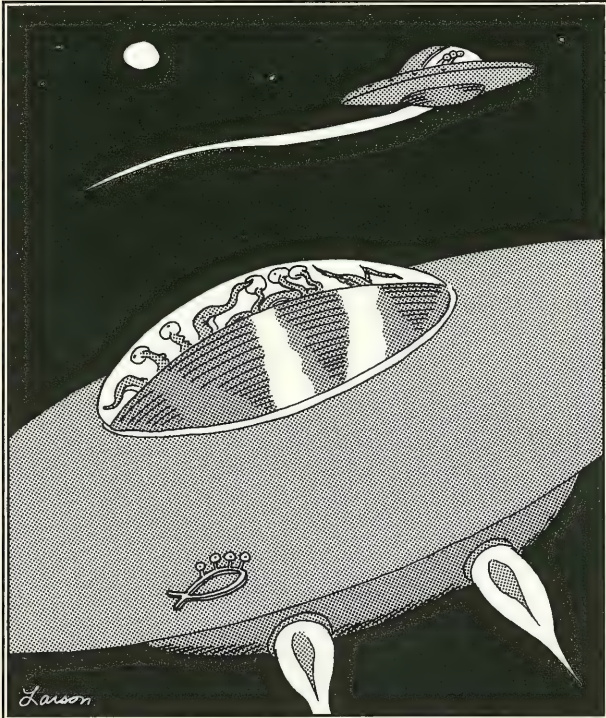
"And the note says: 'Dear classmates and Ms. Kilgore: Now that my family has moved away, I feel bad that I whined so much about being mistreated. Hope the contents of this box will set things right. Love, Pandora.'... How sweet."

8/29/94



When the dust had settled, a lone figure was revealed standing on the small knoll. Yes, he, too, was a herd animal—but he was *through* running.

9/1/94



12 October 1994

Dear Mr. Larson,

Congratulations on your imminent retirement. We will miss you.

As you will soon have a lot of time on your hands, perhaps you could find a moment to answer this letter regarding the enclosed cartoon, which I have discussed with my husband, coworkers, and friends, and

**WE DON'T GET IT!
WE JUST DON'T GET IT!!!**

Sincerely

Noreen Wiezalis

Editor's note: The aliens here have their own religious symbol, and they've attached it to the rear of their flying saucer.

9/2/94



The often romanticized image of cowboys and aliens

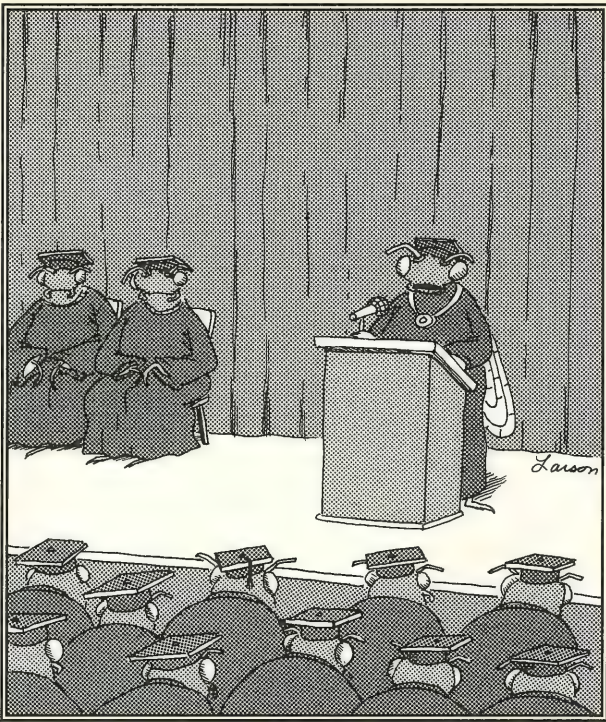
9/5/94

Larson



"We're *not* going to the mountains, so shut up and let's go! ... Most kids would count their lucky stars that every vacation their folks took 'em to the beach!"

9/12/94



"And so, as you enter the adult phase of your life, you will thank God that these past 17 years of being stuck in the ground and unable to move are finally over. ... Congratulations, cicadas of '94!"

9/15/94



"Don't eat the flippers, Zeke, or they'll know we're tourists."

9/6/94



Throughout their songwriting careers, the Gershwins rarely discussed their younger brother, Nathan, who played gutbucket.

9/7/94



"It's no good, Dawson! We're being sucked in by the sun's gravitational field and there's nothing we can do! ... And, let me add, those are my sunglasses you're wearing!"

9/8/94



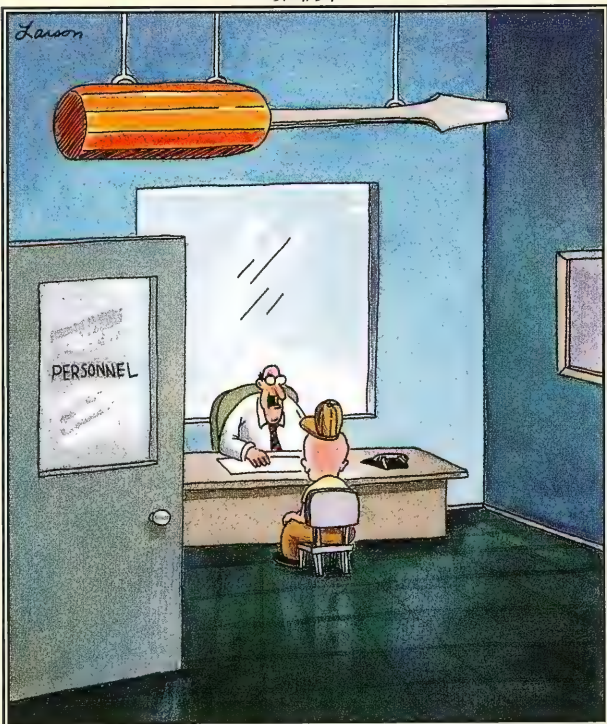
"Whoa whoa whoa! ... You'll have to go back and walk through again."

9/9/94



"Boots! ... Boooooootsy! ... We are calling you from the world of the living! ... Meowwww! ... Are you there, Bootsy? ... Give us a sign!"

9/14/94



"The problem, Mr. Fudd, is that you've been having a subliminal effect on everyone in the factory. We're proud of our product, Mr. Fudd, and there's no company in the world that builds a finer skwoo dwivuh. ... Dang! Now you got *me* doing it!"

9/13/94



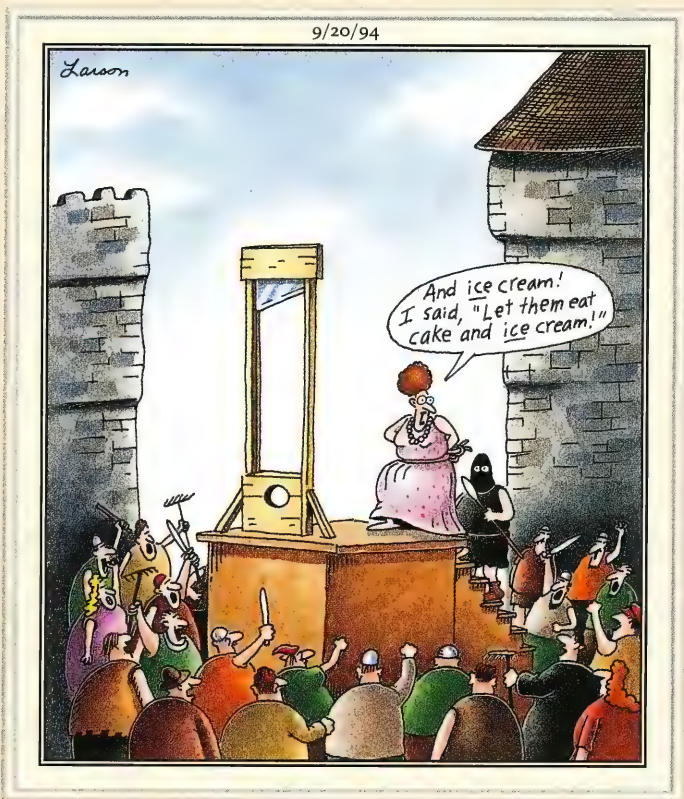
Big dogs having fun with helium



"Boy, you wiped out, Kumba. ...
Nothing left but rebar."



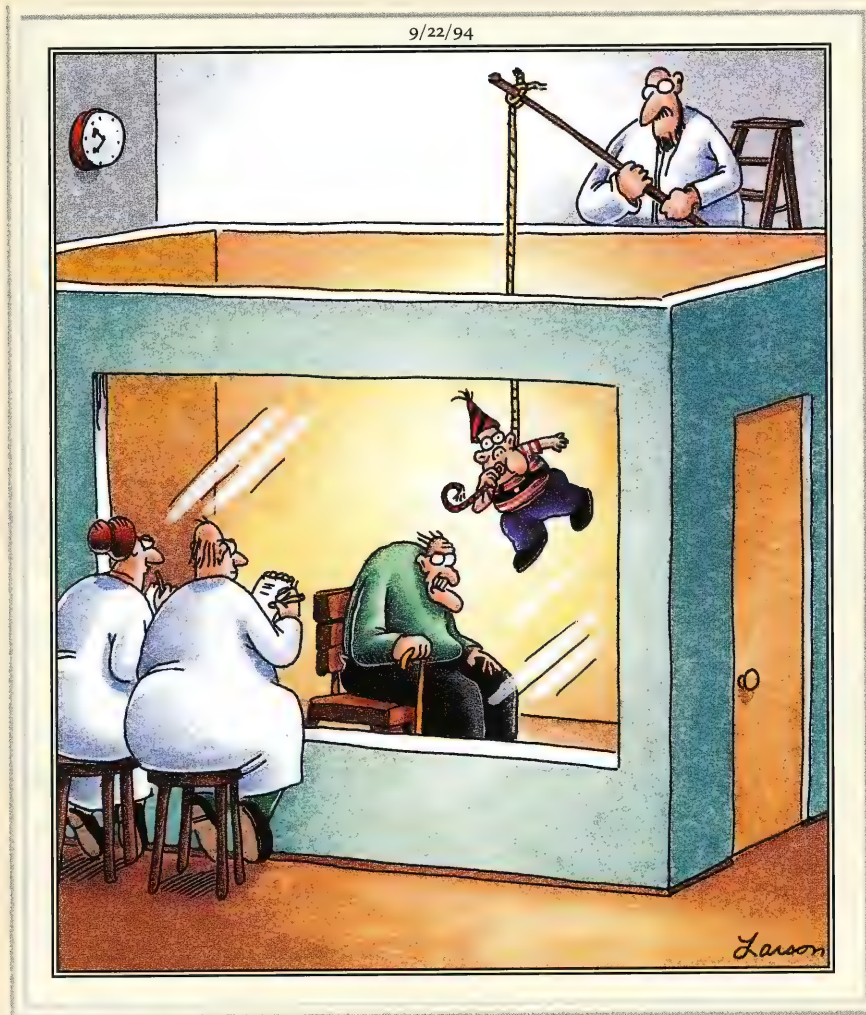
"Well, lad, you caught me fair and square. ...
But truthfully, as far as leprechauns go, I've
never been considered all that lucky."



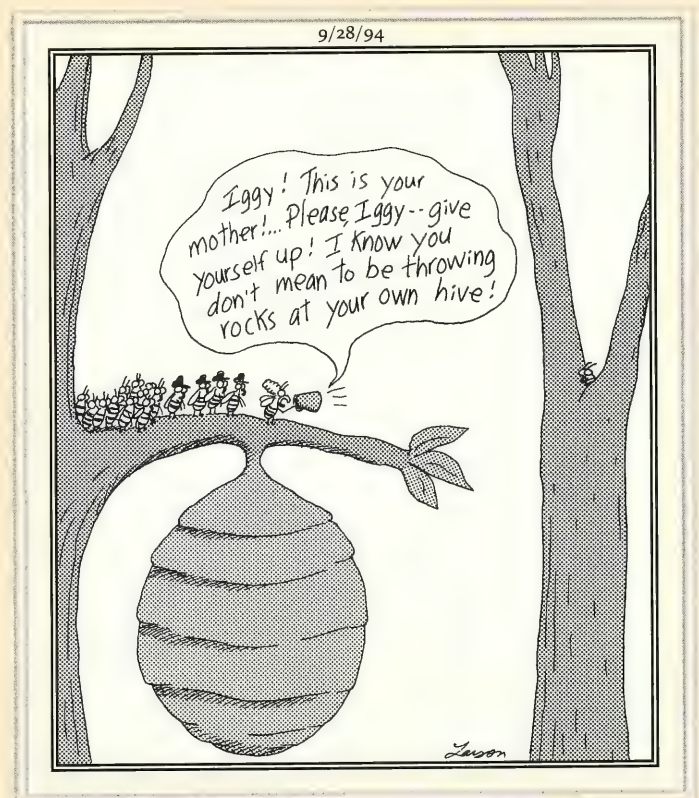
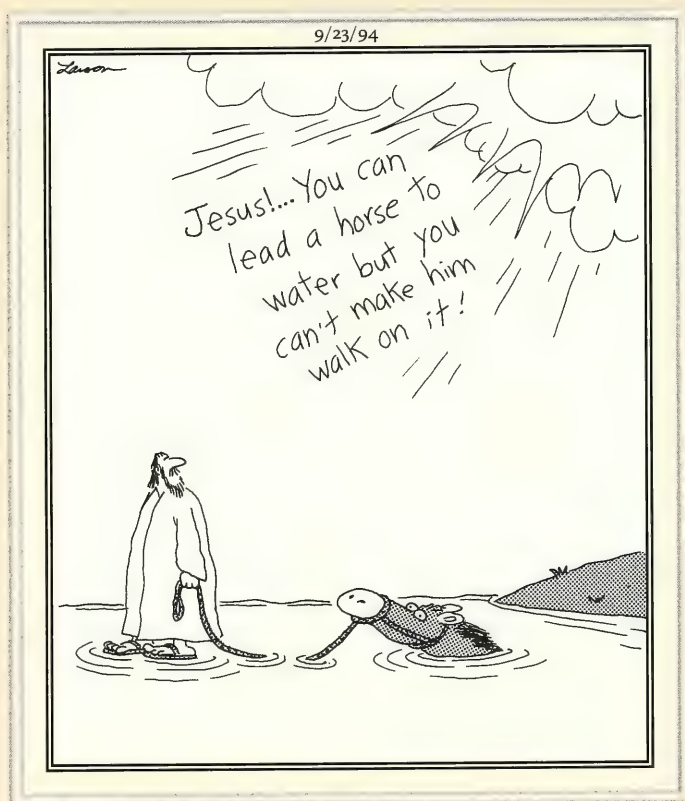
Marie Antoinette's last-ditch effort
to save her head.

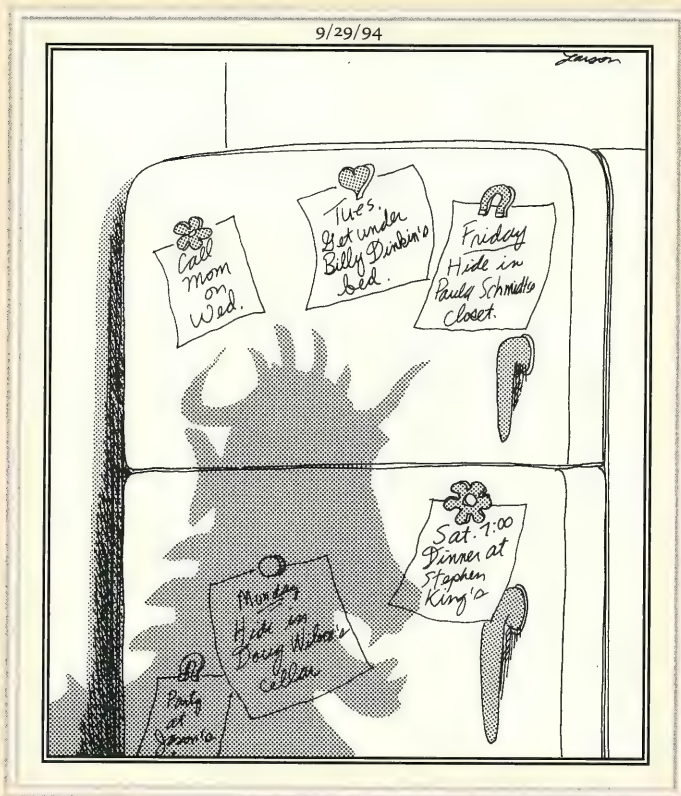


Fish thrill rides

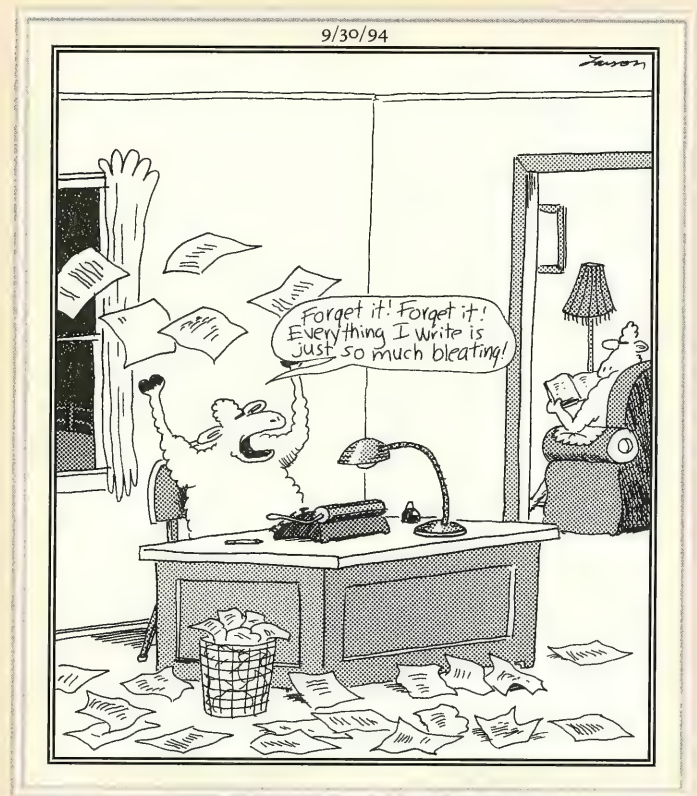


At the Crabbiness Research Institute





On monster refrigerators



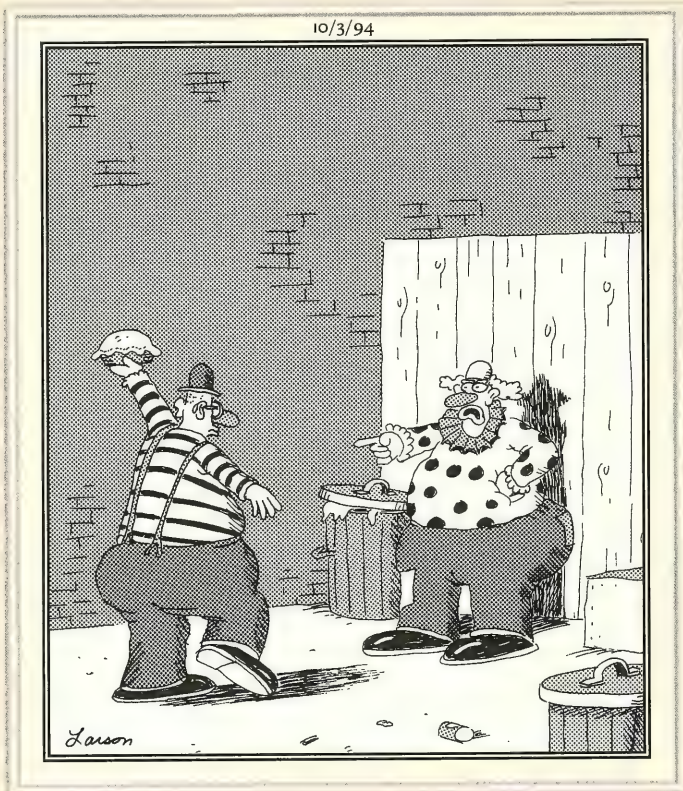
Sheep authors



"One day, Wilson, I'll be sitting at that desk."



"Oh my gosh! You know what that is, Mooky? ... My dad had one when I was a kid!"



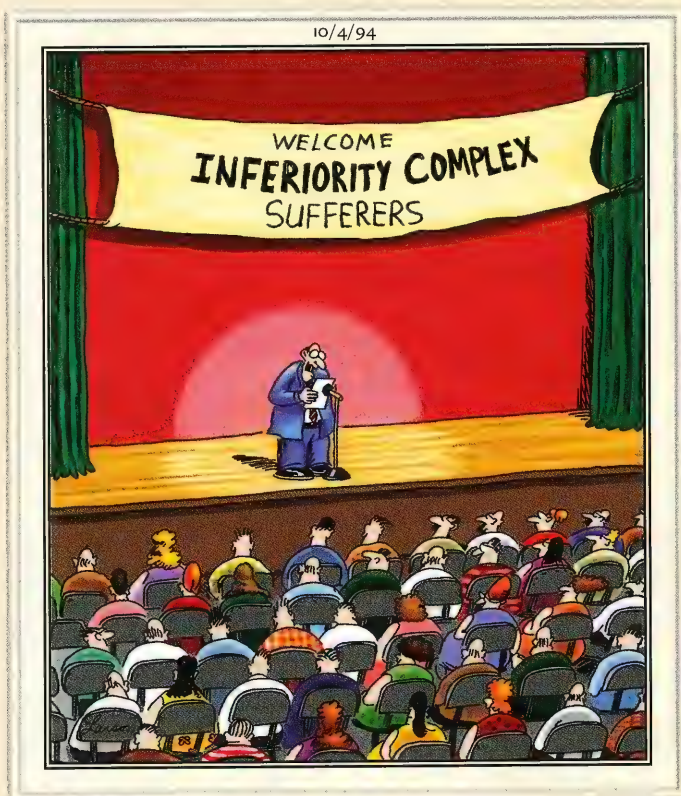
"I wouldn't do that, Spunky—I have friends in pie places."

Cartoonist's note: Above is my own nominee for the worst cartoon I ever drew. (I still cringe.)

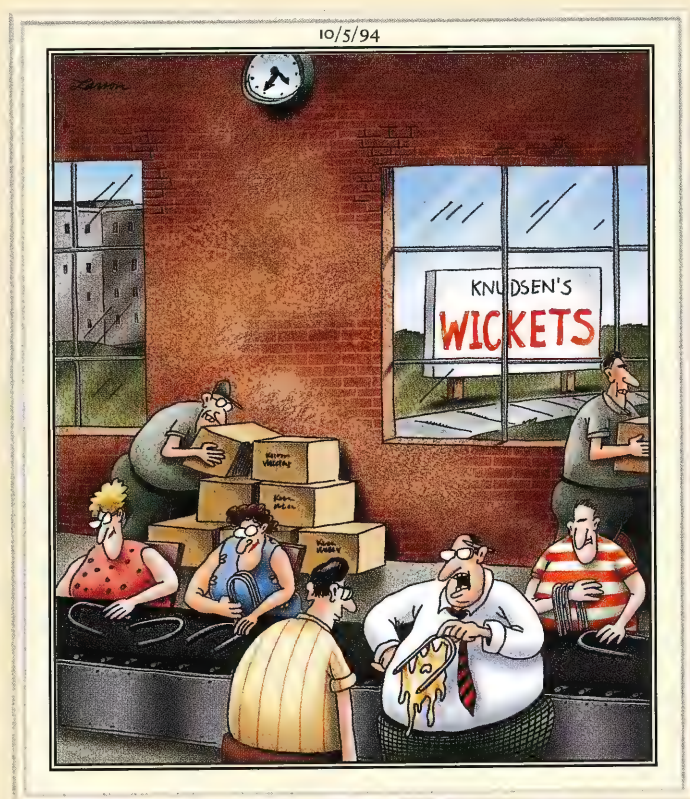
—Gary Larson



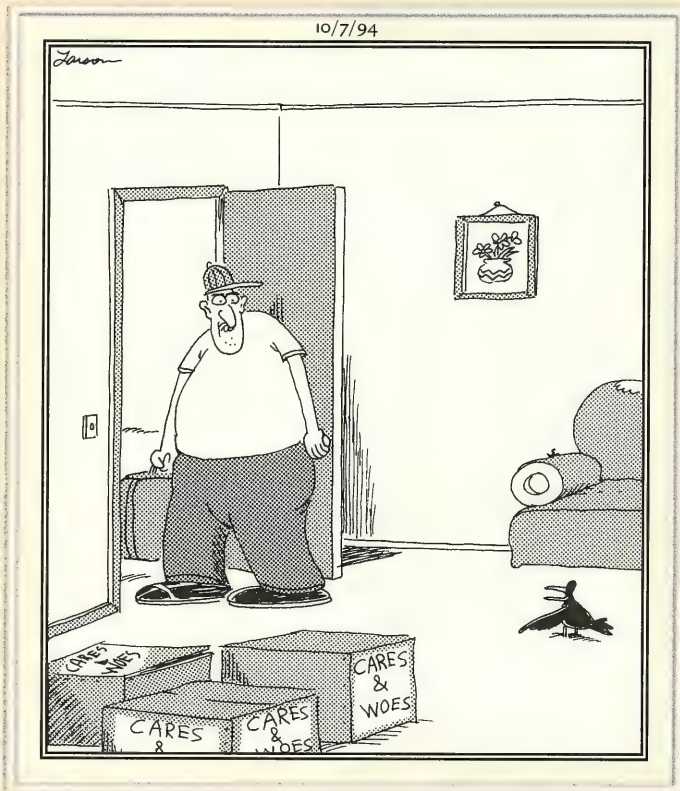
Marv remained calm. No matter how thoroughly they searched, the agents never discovered his "secret" pocket.



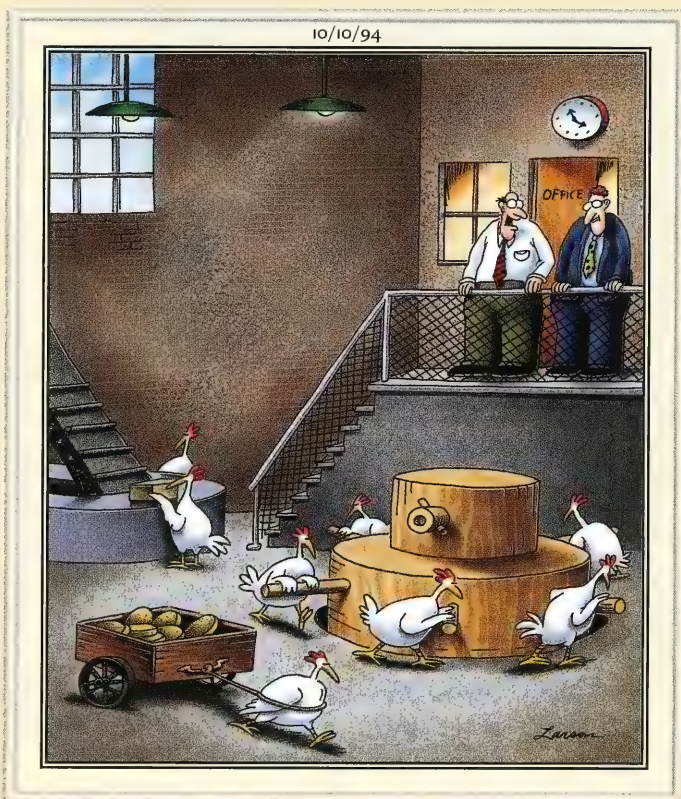
"But before we begin, this announcement: Mr. Johnson! Mr. Frank Johnson! ... If you're out there, the conference organizers would like you to know that you were never actually invited."



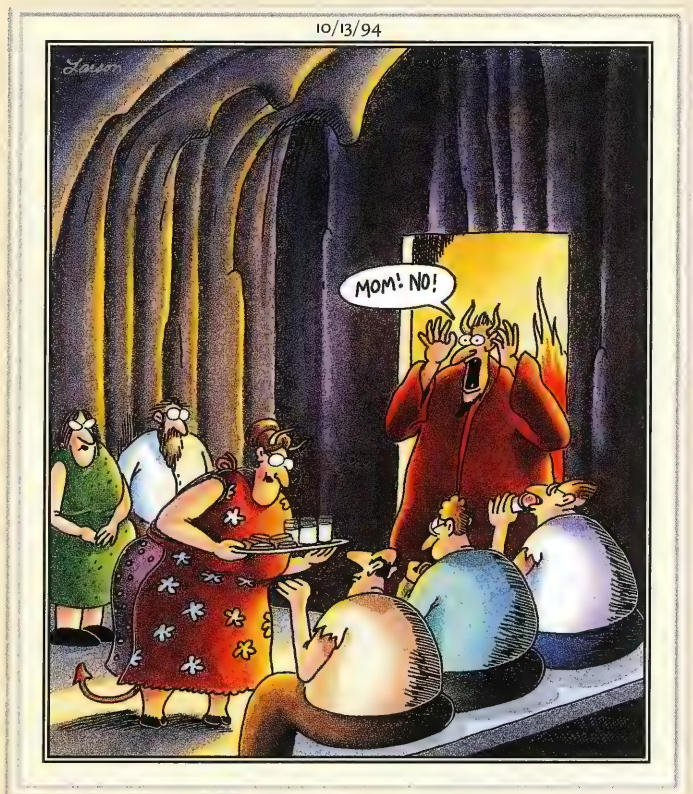
"Well, it came from your division, Sanders, and as you can see, it's covered with honey and molasses! ... You know what that makes this, Sanders?"



"Hey hey hey! ... Before you go, pack up this depressing garbage of yours and get it out of here!"



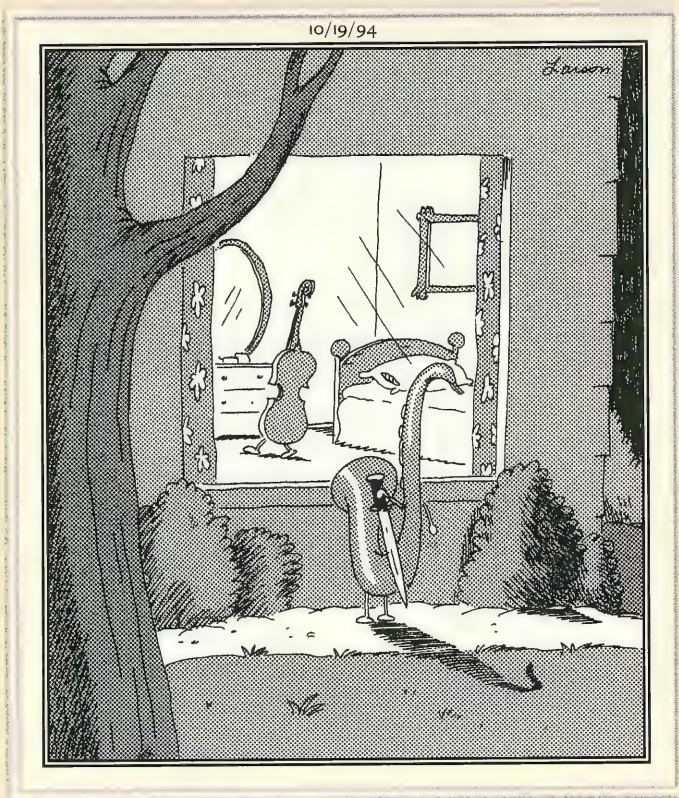
"Oh, yeah! They work real hard, all day long, seven days a week! ... And here's the best part—for chicken feed!"



Despite his repeated efforts to explain things to her, Satan could never dissuade his mother from offering cookies and milk to the accursed.



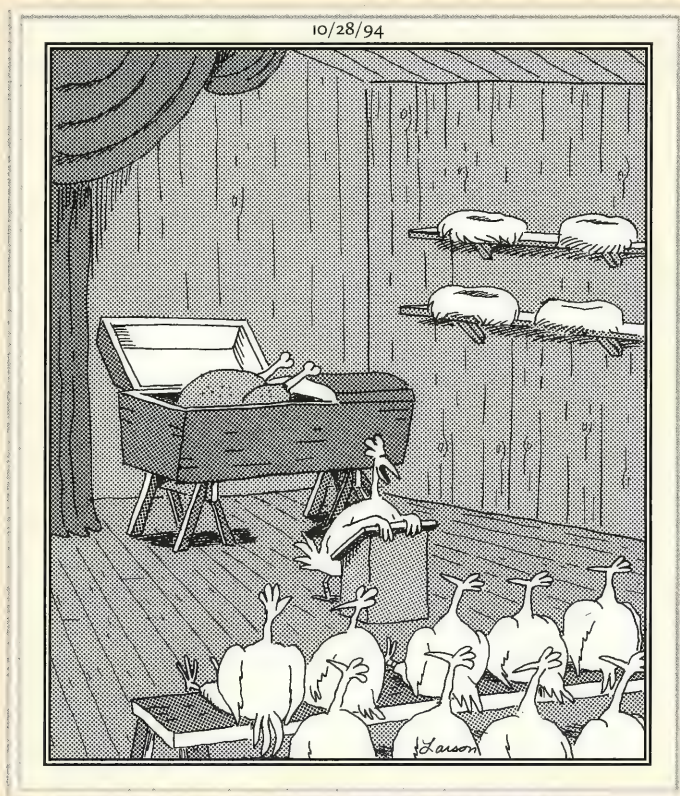
"I know you miss the Wainwrights, Bobby, but they were weak and stupid people—and that's why we have wolves and other large predators."



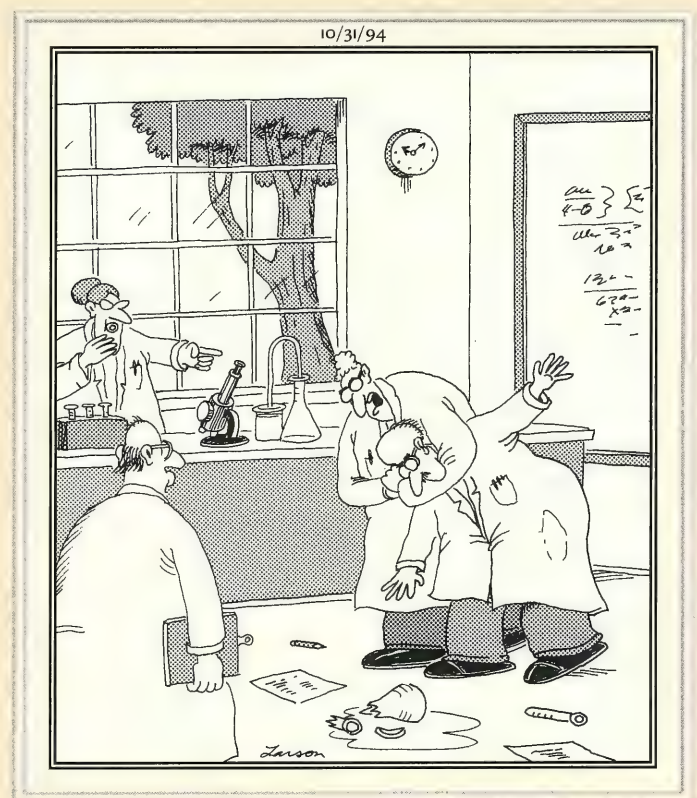
Scene from *Fiddle Attraction*



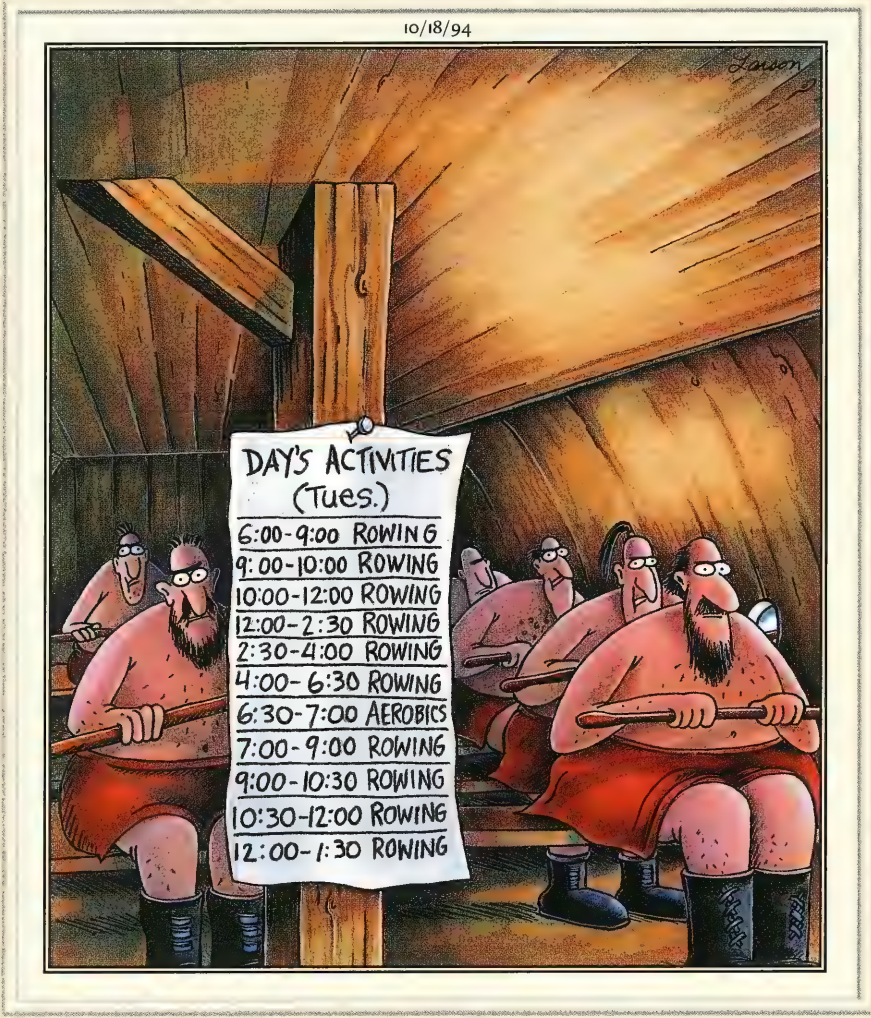
The Army's last-ditch effort to destroy Mothra



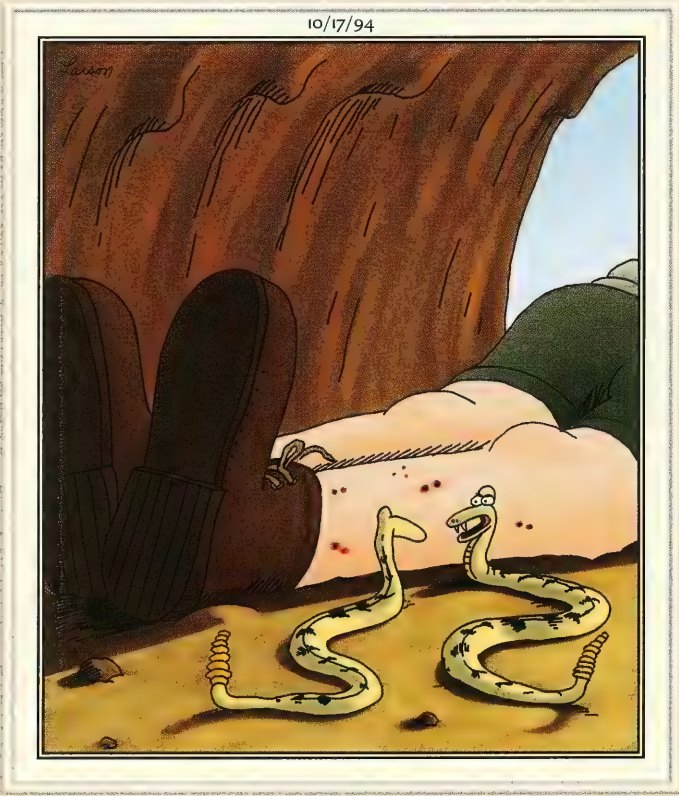
"And yes, Norman *was* beheaded, cleaned, and plucked. ... But we all know Norman's wacky sense of humor, and we can take comfort knowing he would've gotten a kick out of this."



"But on the other hand, Feldman, having the biggest brain among us means that it is mere child's play to subdue you with an ordinary headlock!"



Slave-ship daily schedules



"Excuse me? *Excuse me?* ... I believe the biggest set of fang marks belongs to *me*, my friend!"



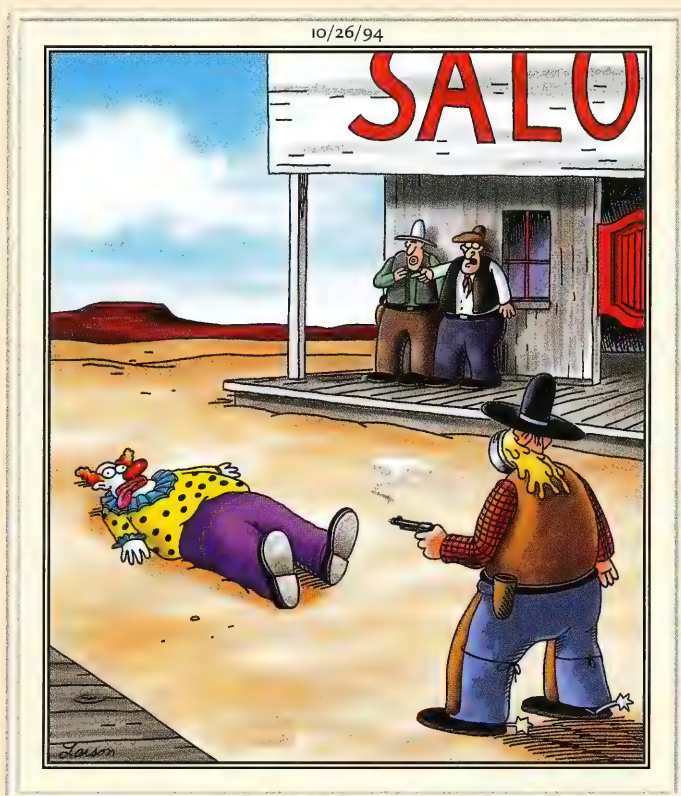
Life in the Old Weth



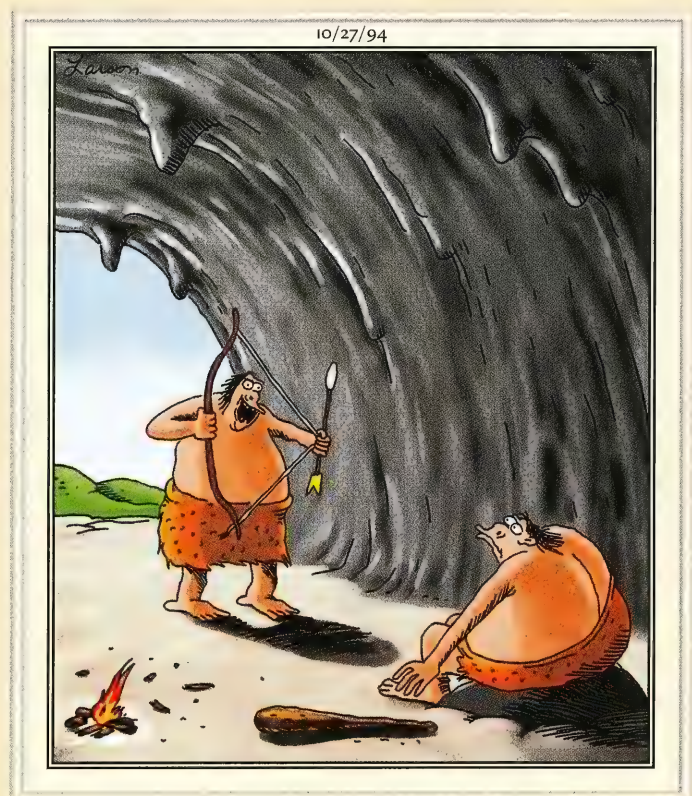
"And I say we go outside and we play with this ball!"



The gods play with Ted and Jerry

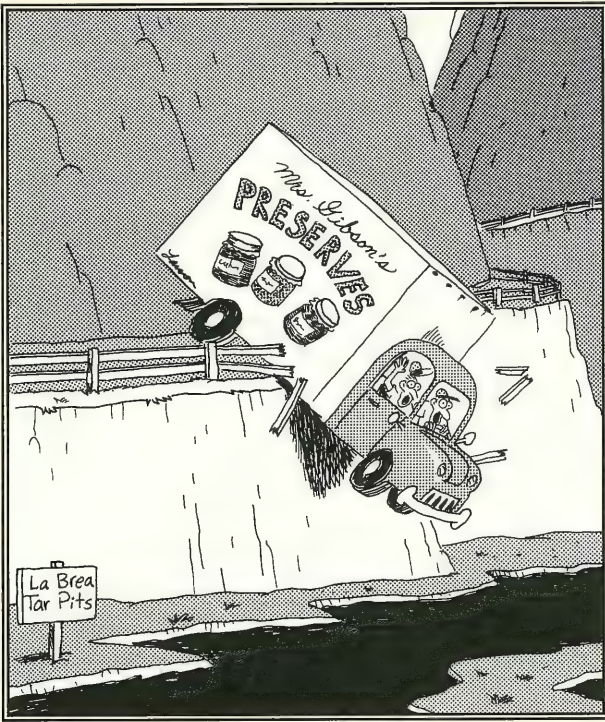


It was over. But the way the townsfolk called it, neither man was a clear winner.



"Uh, uh, uh—I wouldn't do that, Thorg. I know how to use this thing."

11/1/94



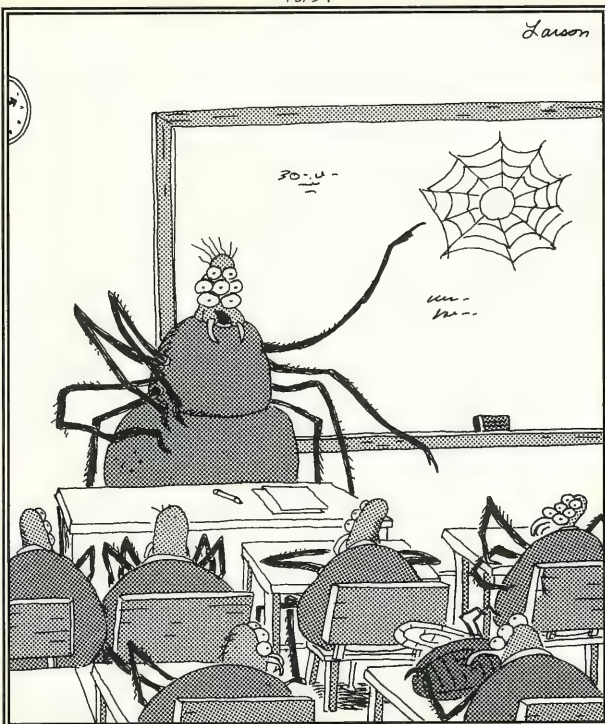
11/2/94

Larson



11/3/94

Larson



"Now what theorem applies to this ... Douglas! Is that a fly you're sucking on? Well, I hope you brought enough for everyone!"

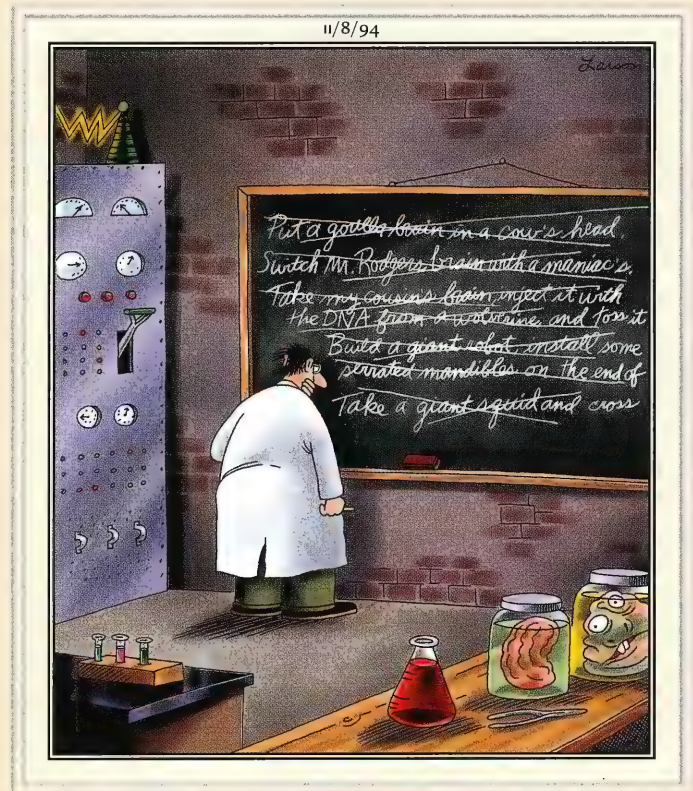
11/7/94



"Whoa! Here we go again! ...'Pony Express Rider Walks into Workplace, Starts Shooting Every Horse in Sight.'"



By secretly working out for many months, Irwin became the envy of all the 98-pound weaklings.



The curse of mad scientist's block



"You're up, Red."



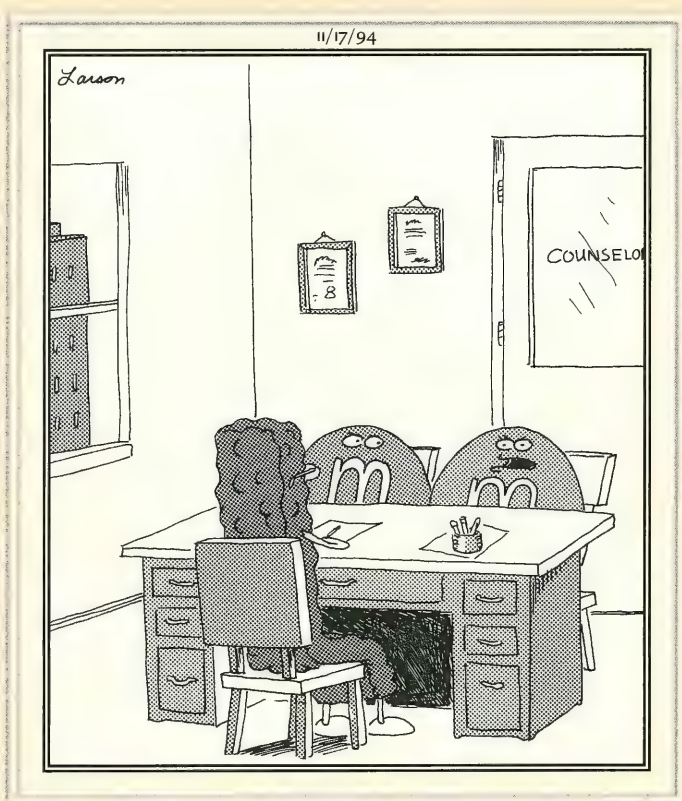
"Look. You *had* five bones, right? Your friend Zooky comes over, stays awhile, then leaves. Now you have *four* bones, right? ... You don't have to be a 'Lassie' to figure this one out."



The life and times of Captain Hazelwood

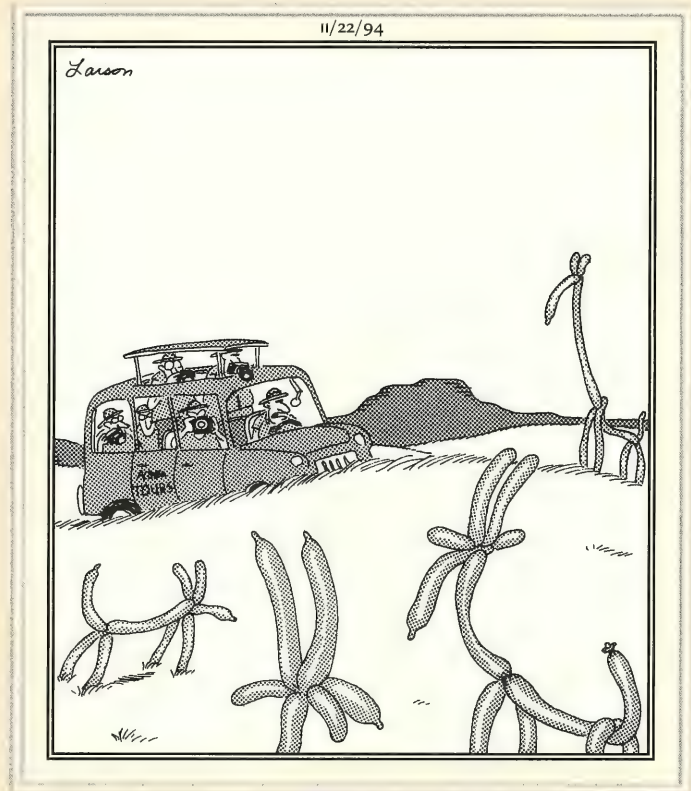


An unnatural silence hung in the kitchen, and Spunky sensed that his arrival was unexpected.

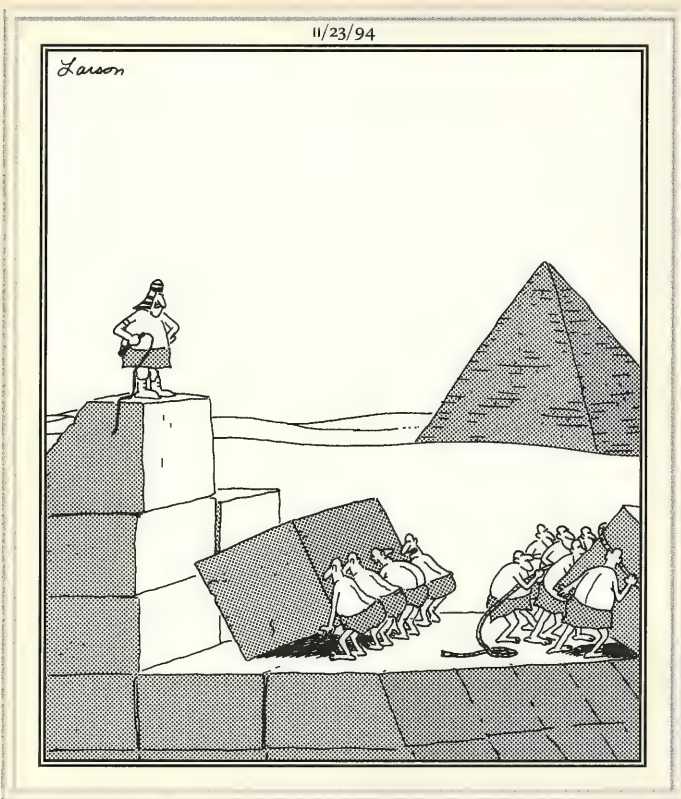


"Look, marriage is okay—but I also want my own identity. ... I mean, how would you like it if everyone referred to you as 'Chocolate Bar and Chocolate Bar'?"

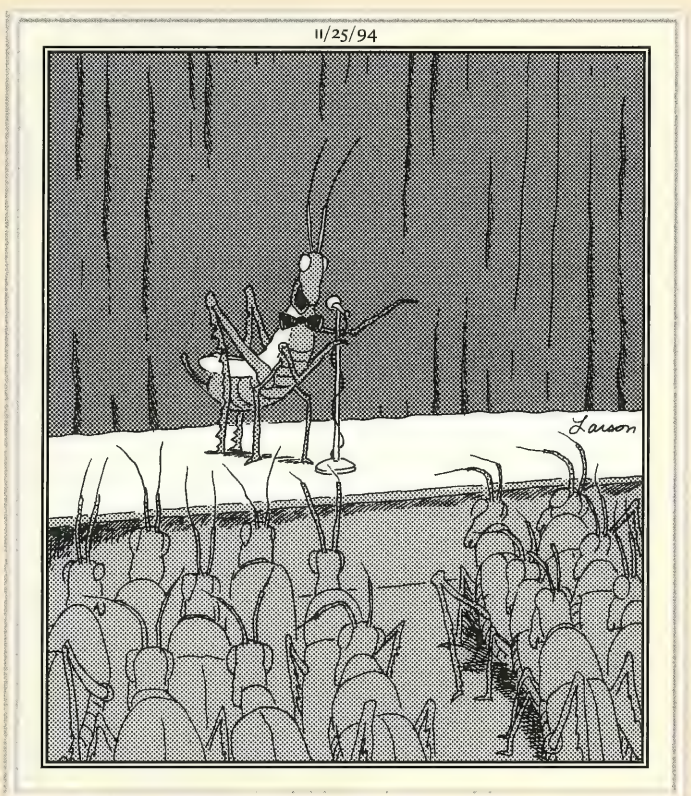




"There're some, folks! These rare and lovely creations have no natural enemies, but balloon animals never last too long in this harsh land."



"Remo! Lift with your knees, not your back!"



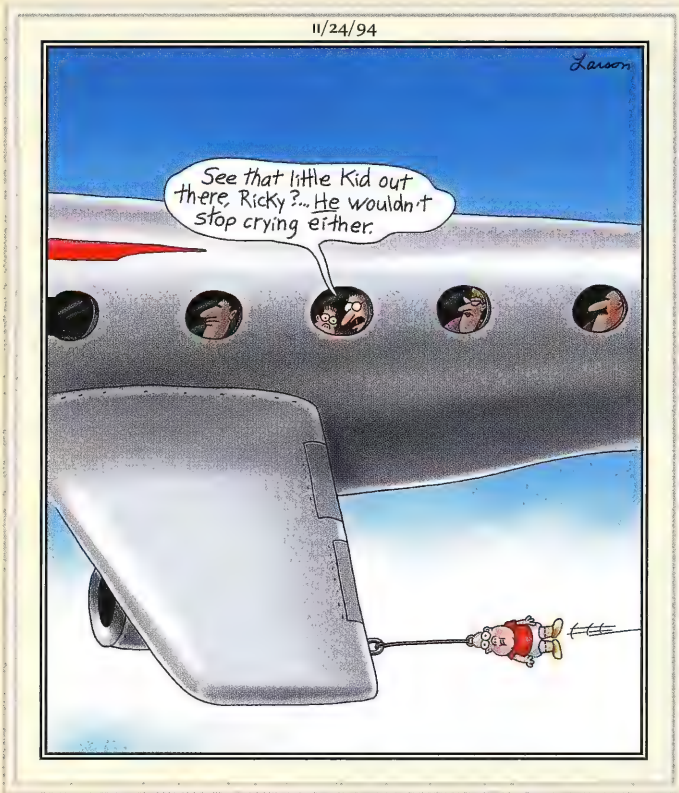
"Okay, that's pretty good! ... Now! I want everyone on this side of the aisle to come in rubbing their legs together when I signal! ... And let's show the other side how it's done!"



"Leonard painted that and hung it up just this afternoon. ... He calls it, *It's My Couch!* *My Couch!* Don't They Understand?"



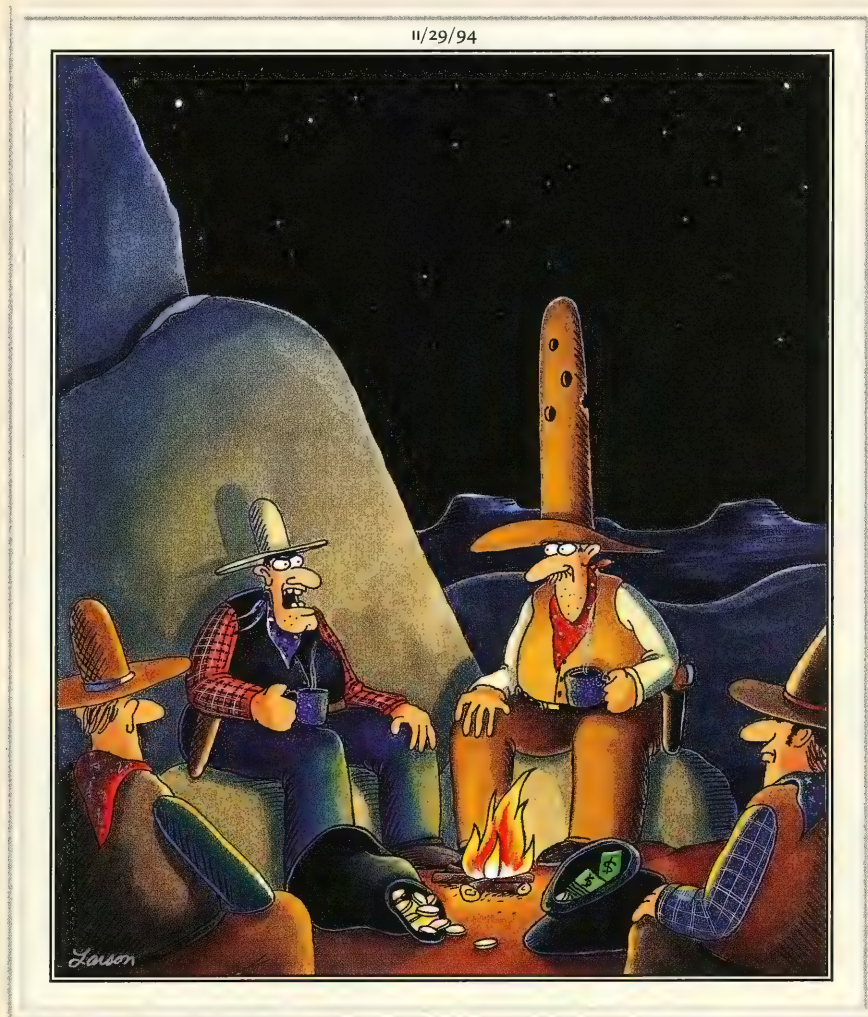
Dogs and alcohol: the tragic untold story.



By simply attaching the new ACME Wingbaby, airlines can significantly improve their passengers' overall comfort.



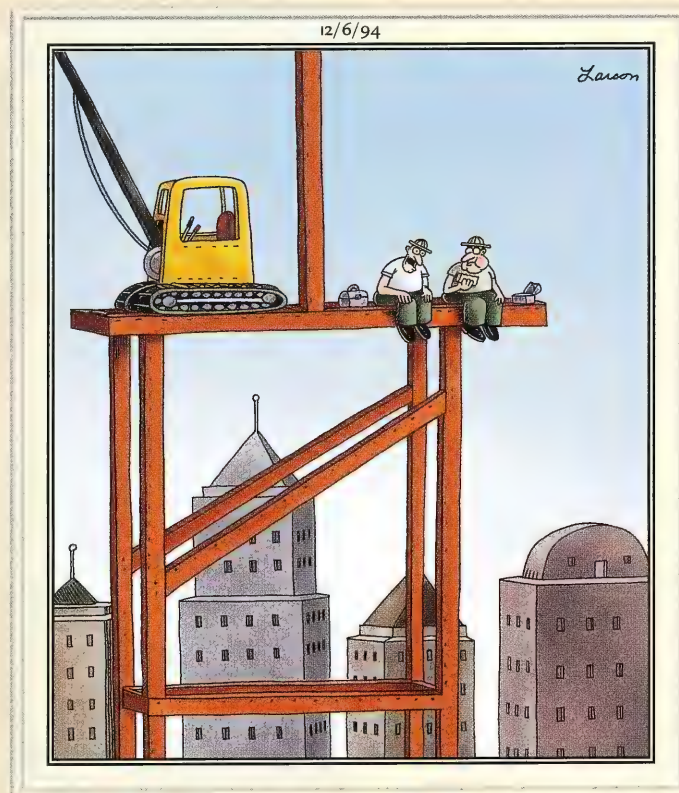
"Okay, you two! Problem solved!"



"Hell, Ben, you catch a few bullets through your hat during every holdup, and I'm finally gonna say I ain't ever been much impressed."



"I might have missed, Lou, but I take some satisfaction in knowing I busted up their little party."

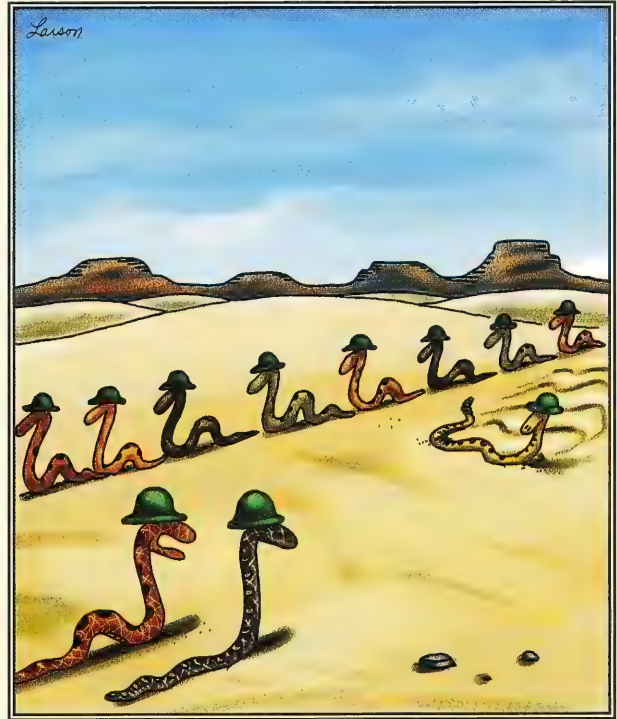


"You ever get that urge, Frank? It begins with looking down from 50 stories up, thinking about the meaninglessness of life, listening to dark voices deep inside you, and you think, 'Should I? ... Should I? ... Should I push someone off?'"

12/13/94

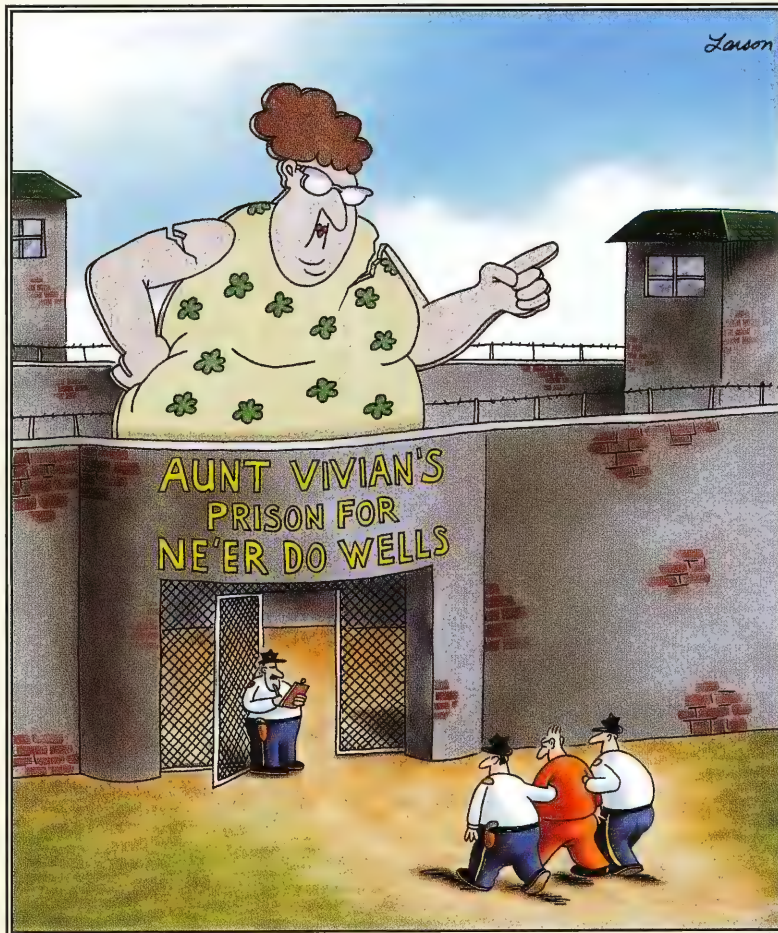


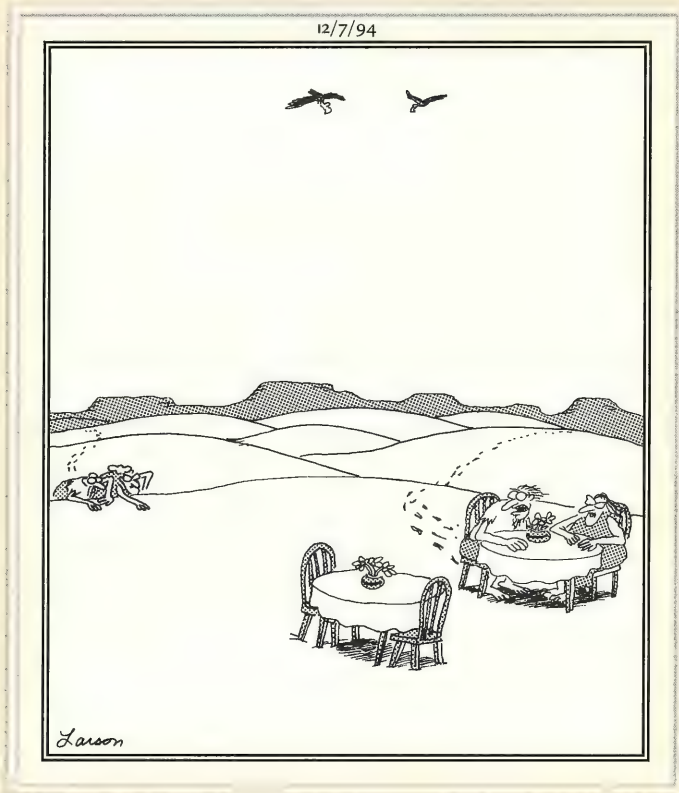
12/14/94



"JOHNSON! BACK IN FORMATION! ...
Dang, I hate sidewinders."

12/2/94

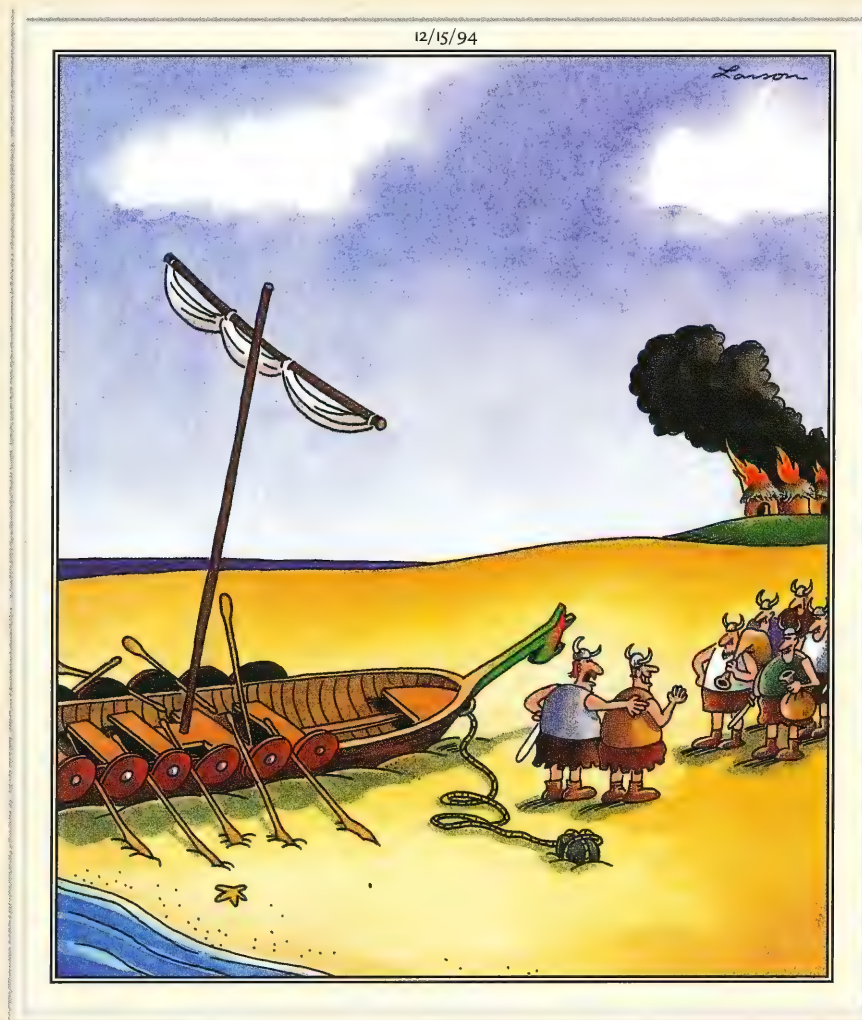




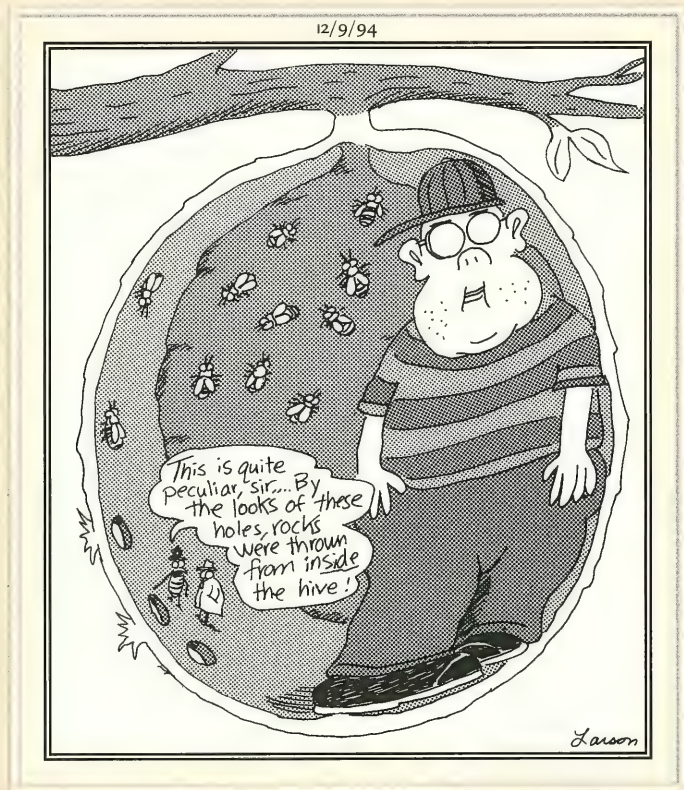
"Well, it *was* a private table."



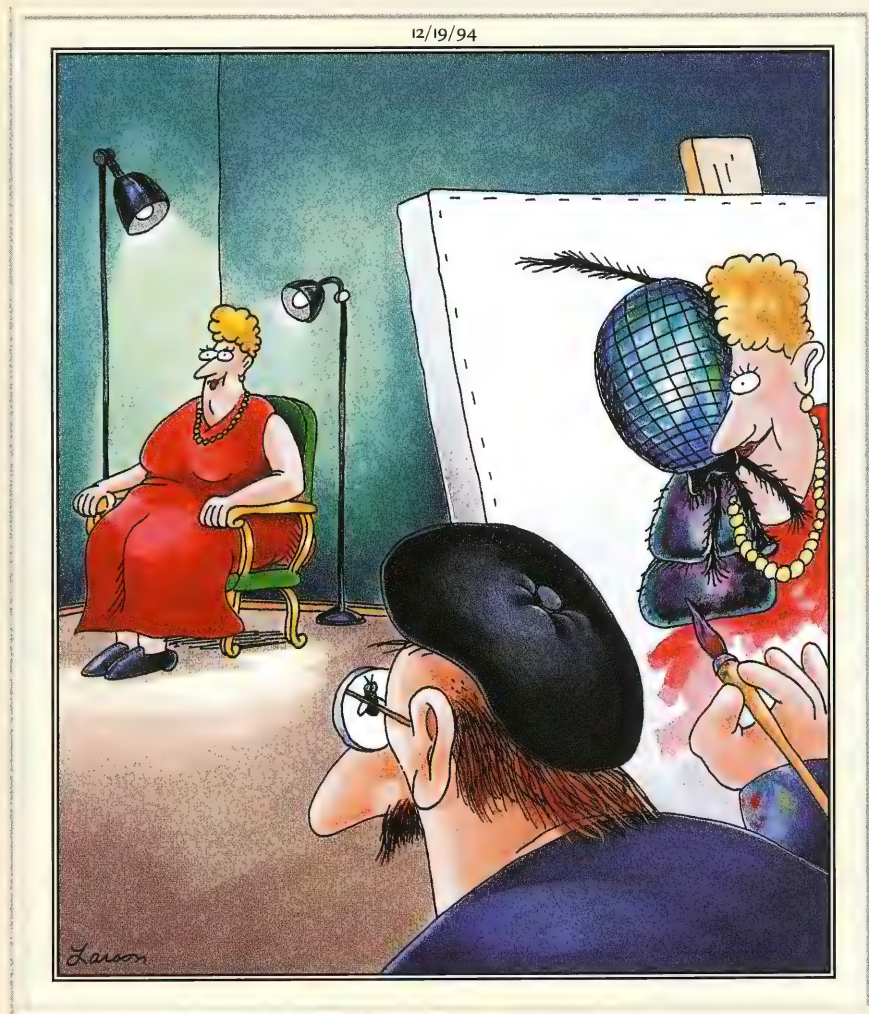
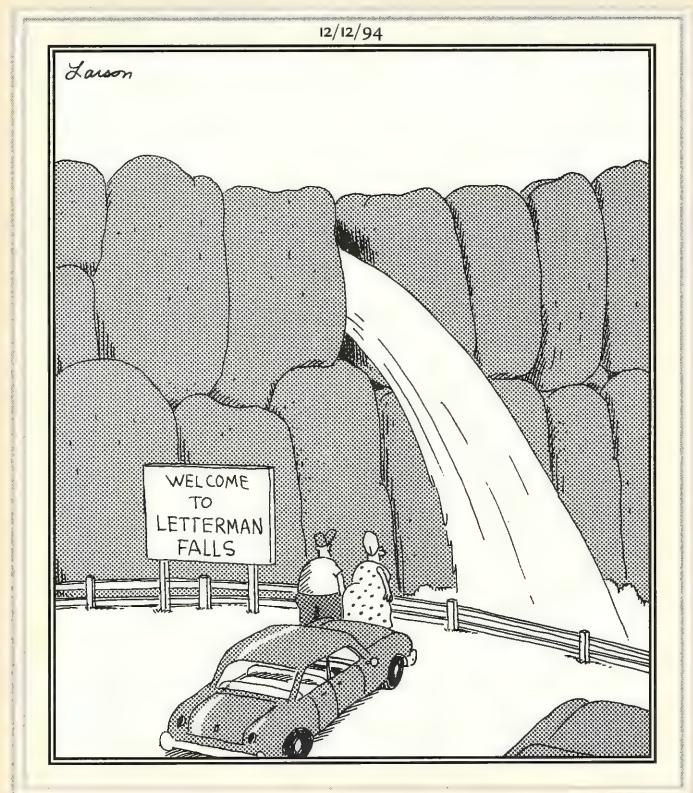
"You folks like flies? Well, wait till you see the parlor!"



"Everyone can just put down their loot and plunder, and Sven here—yes, old Sven, who was in charge of reading the tide chart—has something to say to us all."



Artist: G. Larson
Medium: Ink on paper
Title: It Was Late and I Was Tired



12/16/94



Hunting lodge readings

12/22/94



12/21/94



"Your dog had both motive and opportunity, ma'am: He hated the cat and he's had training in operating heavy machinery. ... Your husband, we feel, was just in the wrong place at the wrong time."

12/27/94



"Well, hell no, I can't tell Harriet! ... First thing she's gonna ask me is what was I doin' checkin' out a decoy!"

12/20/94



"CHICKEN UP!"

12/26/94

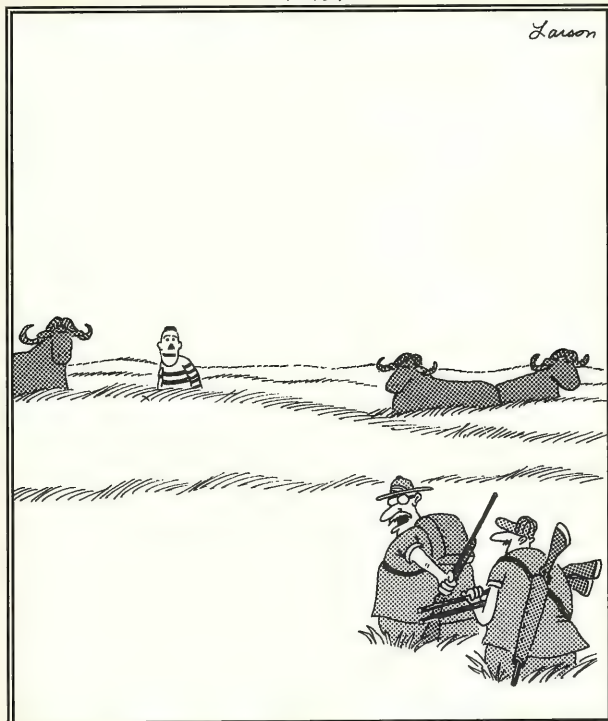


"The *first* thing I'm gonna do is wipe that smile off your face!"

12/23/94

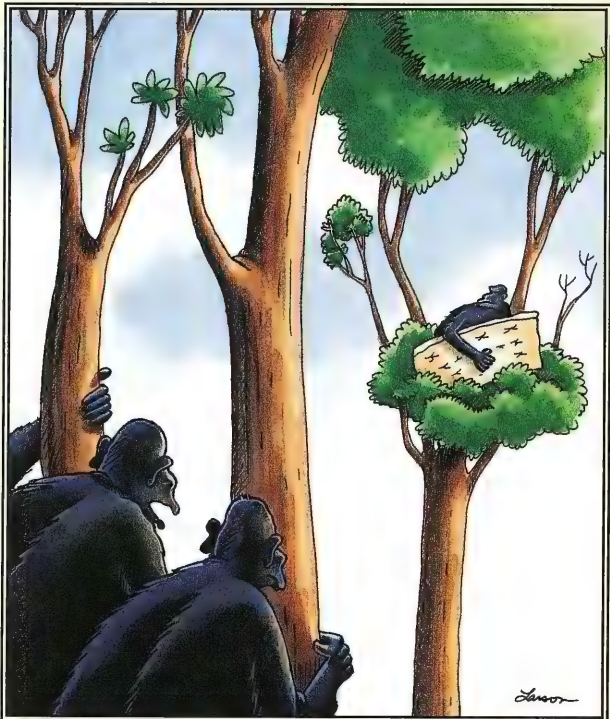


12/28/94



"Situation's changed, Jules. ... Take my buffalo gun and hand me my mime rifle."

12/29/94



"He's making his nest now. ... There! See it!? That son-of-a- ... he's got himself a futon!"

12/30/94



Until God warned him to knock it off, Noah would often try to get a little poker game going with some of the dumb animals.

The final syndicated Far Side cartoon to appear in newspapers

1/1/95

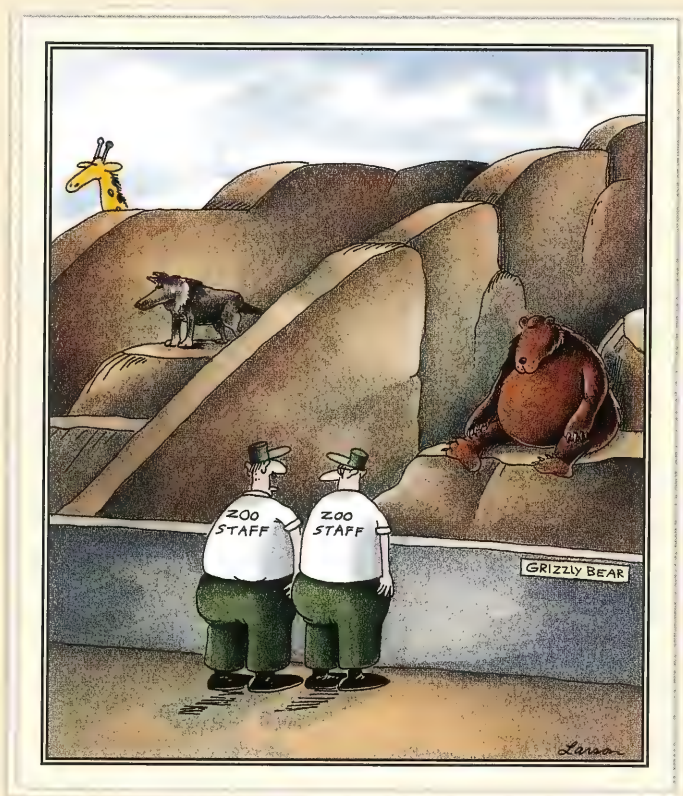


Appendix

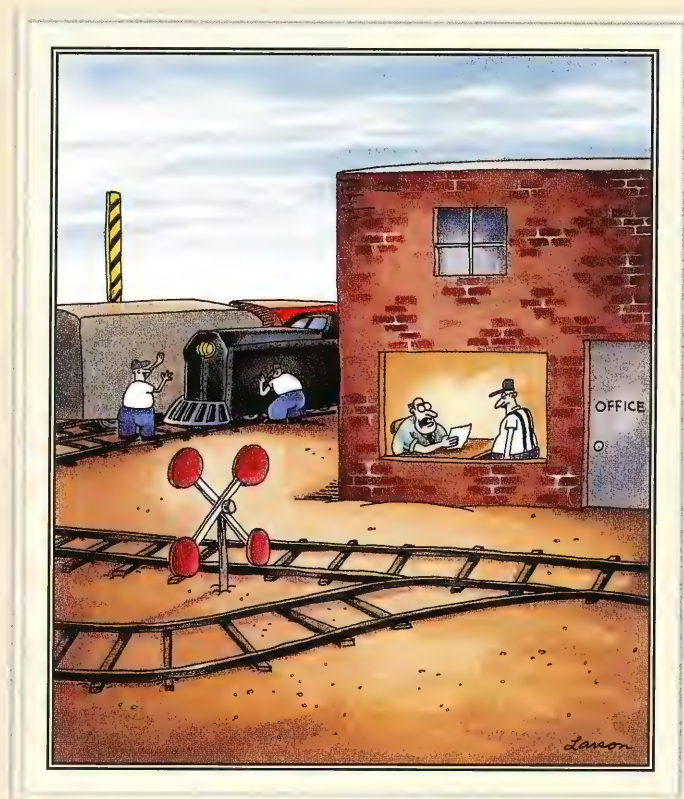


Appendix

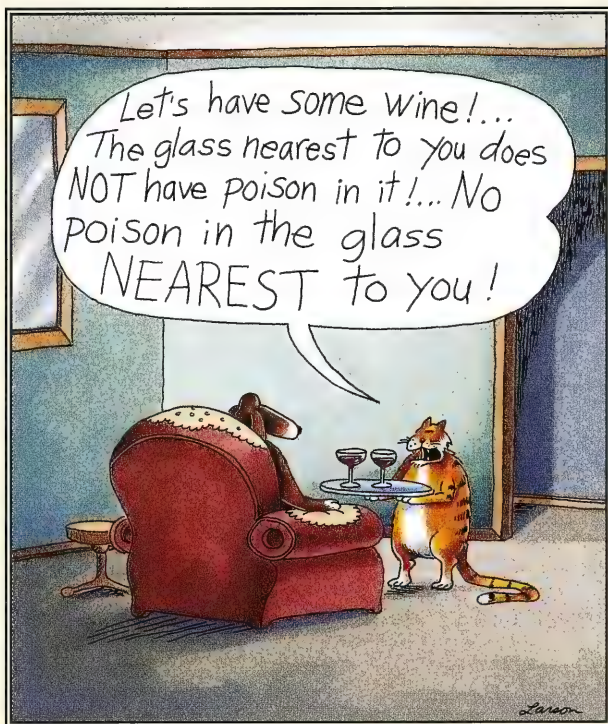
The following thirteen cartoons were created for Last Chapter and Worse, published in 1996, and were not syndicated in newspapers.



"You know, Ned, you're my best friend, and I just gotta tell someone. It's time I come out of the closet and stop living this lie. ... I hate animals."



"I've been looking at your time sheets, Webster ... leaving early, coming in late, etc., etc. ... Working for the railroad, Webster, means working *all* the livelong day."



When dumb animals attempt murder



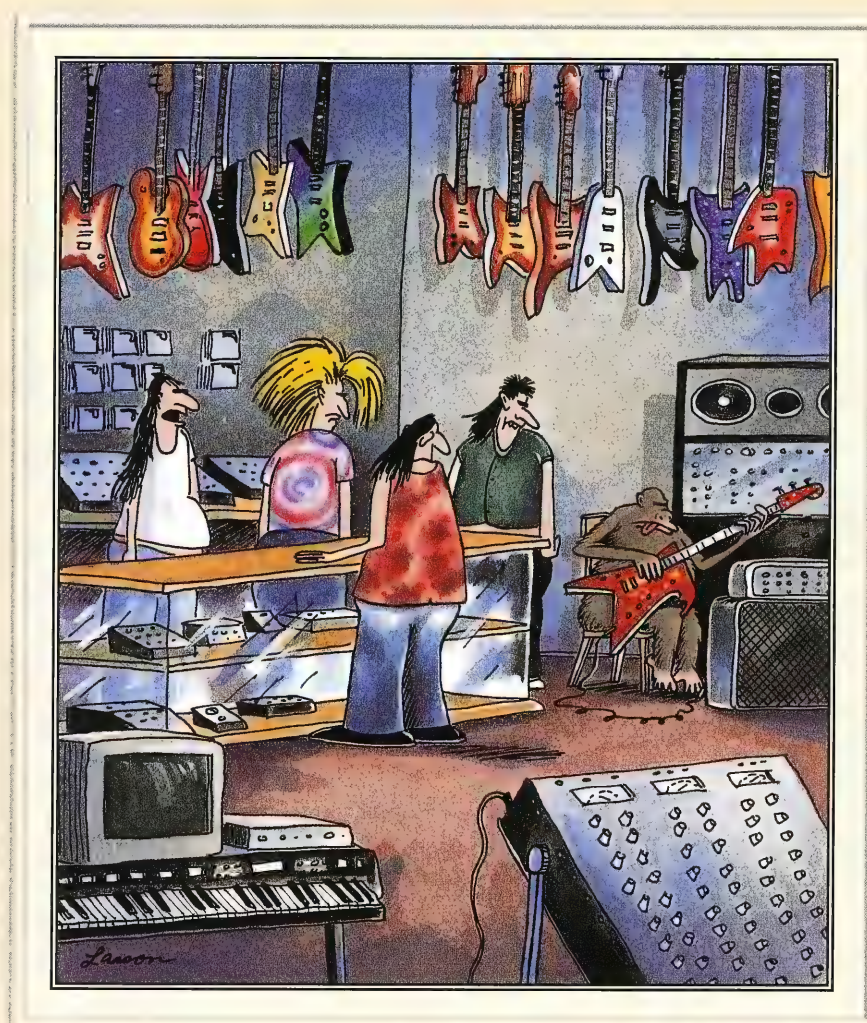
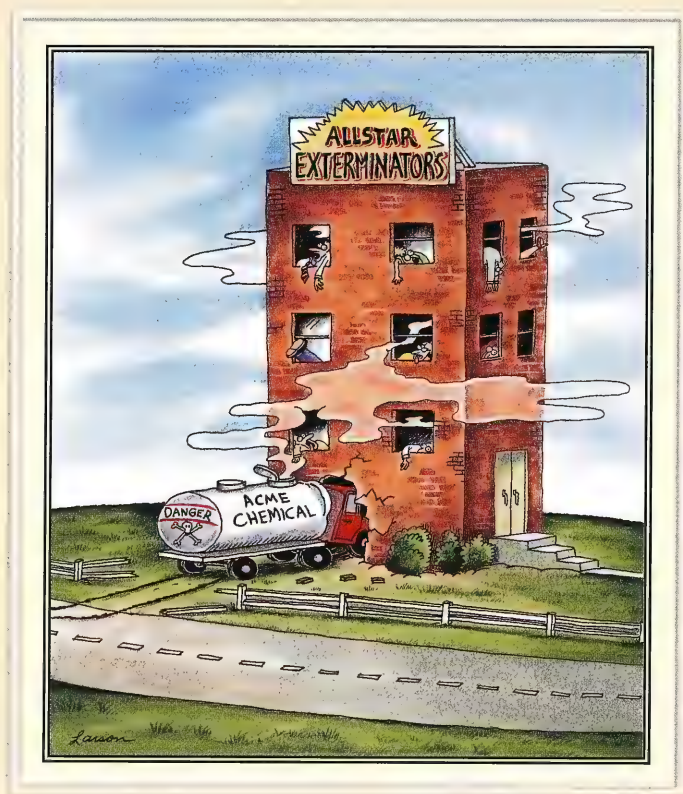
"It's just a simple Rorschach inkblot test, Mr. Bromwell, so just calm down and tell me what each one suggests to you."



"Well, I seen all the commotion, with that there monster destroyin' half the city and whatnot, and I says to myself, 'Hell! Why don't someone just shoot the varmint?'"



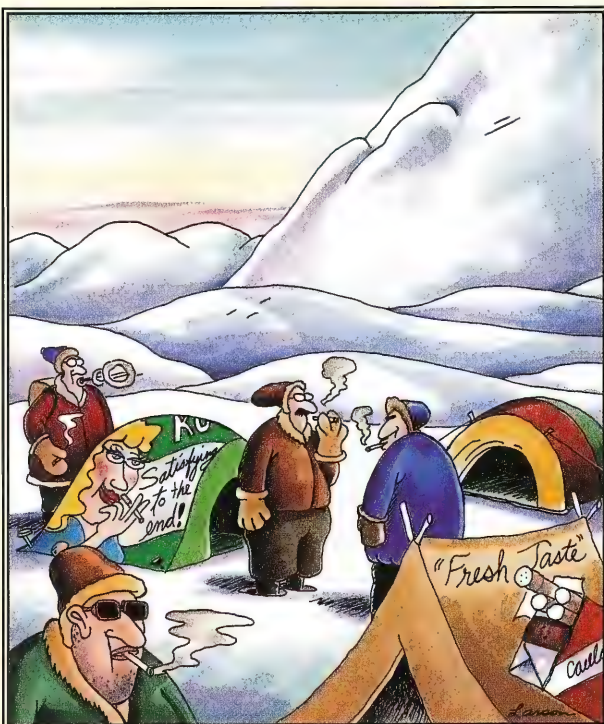
"Well, I suppose it'll be a few thousand more years before we get an 'Arts and Leisure' section."



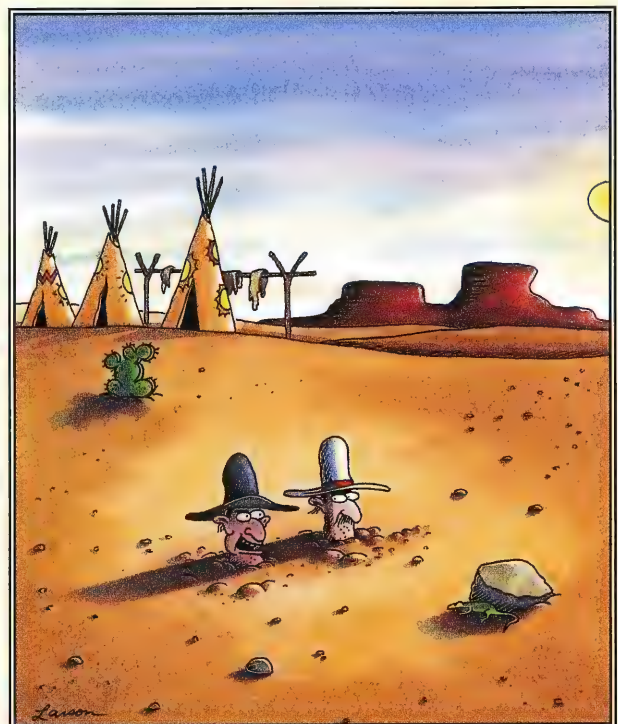
"Yeah, he comes in here a lot—never buys anything, climbs all over the store, has to try out every guitar ... and if you try taking it away from him, he starts screaming his head off."



"You're new here, ain'tcha, kid? Well, on some days the sandwiches contain a dead scorpion. ... Not *every* day, but *some* days—that's why it's hell, kid."



Despite being well-financed by the tobacco industry, the newly formed Smokers' Mountaineering Club met its doom just a few moments after leaving base camp.



"Hey, Frank ... nice and cool here in the shade ... yesiree ... niiaaice and cool."

Appendix

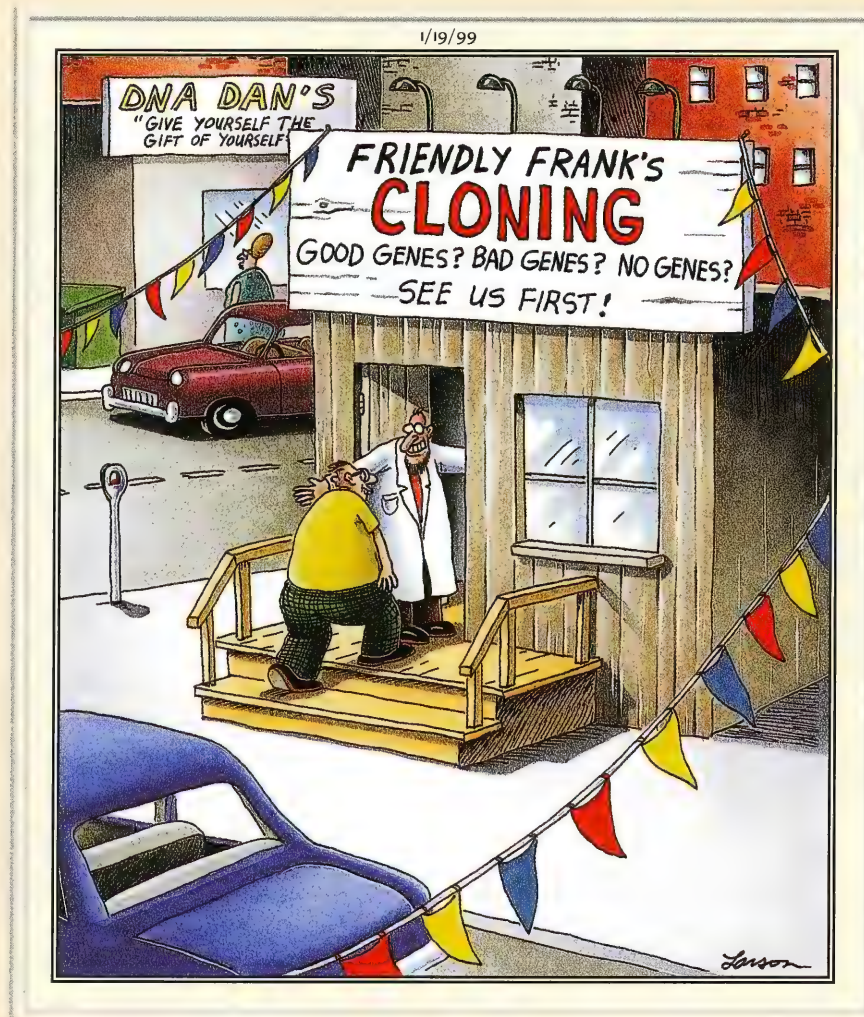
The following six cartoons were created as a special feature of the Science Times section of The New York Times called "The Far Side of Science."



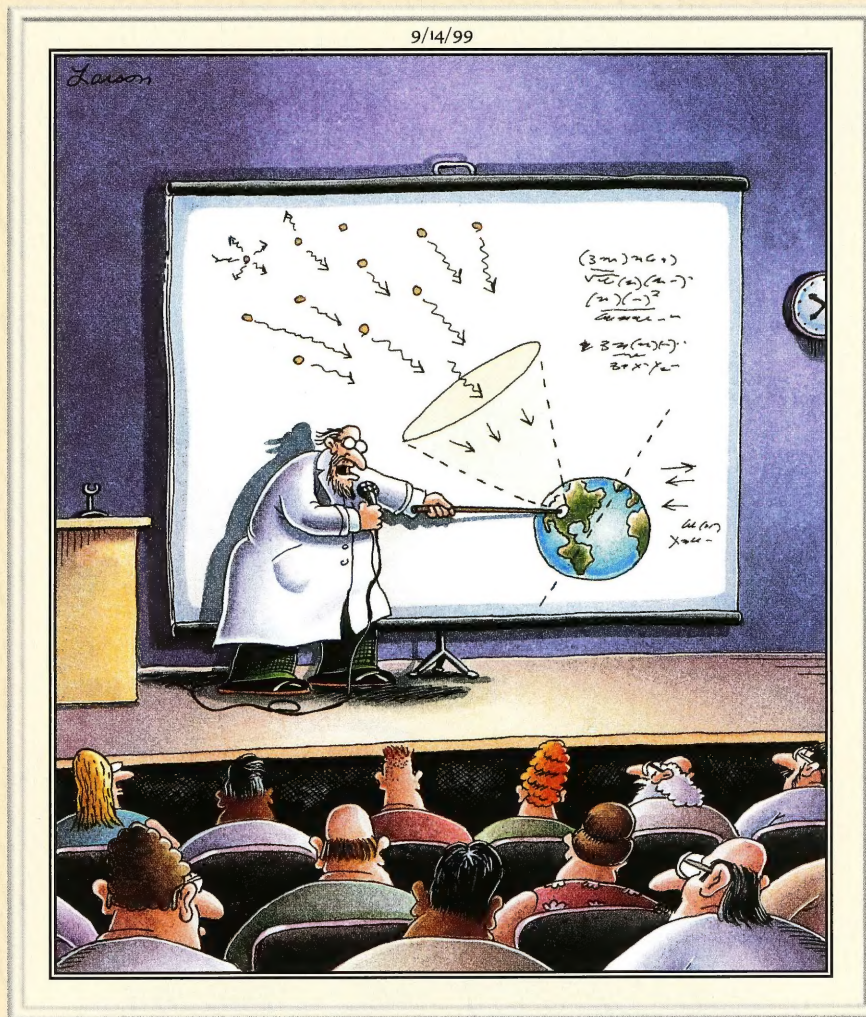
Science meets tabloid TV



Scientist hell



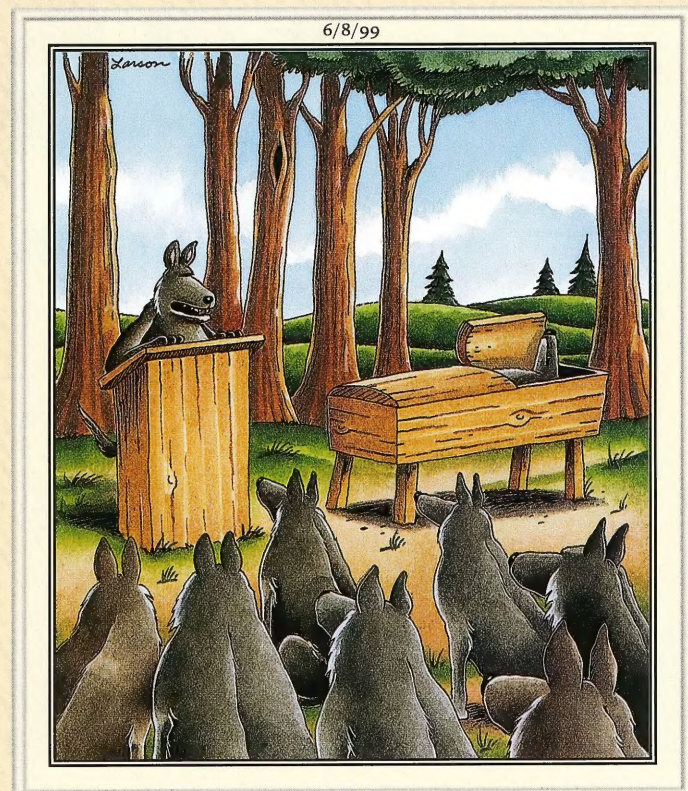
Appendix



"So, in the general relativistic sense, we find that the dynamic friction of the tensor light cone is actually negative, creating a local convergence of photons, which causes the stars at night to be big and bright ... especially here, deep in the heart of Texas."



"Don't threaten *me*, Thagerson! My cousin is an anthropologist, and she can make your life *hell*!"



"Yes, we'll all miss him, but we must not forget: Louis was shot while slaughtering chickens, so we can take solace in knowing that he died doing what he loved."

The End



